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BARROW'S SERMONS.

SERMONS,

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME II,

containing

TWENTY-FIVE SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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SERMON XXV.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

MATTH. xxii. 39.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

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THE essential goodness of God, and his special benignity toward mankind, are to a considering mind divers ways very apparent: the frame of the world, and the natural course of things, do with a thousand voices loudly and clearly proclaim them to us; every sense doth yield us affidavit to that speech of the holy Psalmist, *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord:* we see it in the glorious brightness of the skies, and in the pleasant verdure of the fields; we taste it in the various delicacies of food, supplied by land and sea; we smell it in the fragrances of herbs and flowers; we hear it in the natural music of the woods; we feel it in the comfortable warmth of heaven, and in the cheering freshness of the air; we continually do possess and enjoy it in the numberless accommodations of life, presented to us by the bountiful hand of nature. Psal. xxxiii. 5. cxix. 64.

Of the same goodness we may be well assured by that common providence which continually doth uphold us in our being, doth opportunely relieve our needs, doth protect us in dangers, and rescue us from imminent mischiefs, doth comport with our infirmities and misdemeanours;

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the which, in the Divine Psalmist's style, *doth hold our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved;* doth *redeem our life from destruction;* doth *crown us with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*

Psal. lxvi. 9. lvi. 13. ciii. 4. cxlv. 16.

The dispensations of grace, in the revelation of heavenly truth, in the overtures of mercy, in the succours of our weakness, in the proposal of glorious rewards, in all the methods and means conducing to our salvation, do afford most admirable proofs and pledges of the same immense benignity.

But in nothing is the divine goodness toward us more illustriously conspicuous, than in the nature and tendency of those laws which God hath been pleased, for the regulation of our lives, to prescribe unto us, all which do palpably evidence his serious desire and provident care of our welfare; so that, in imposing them, he plainly doth not so much exercise his sovereignty over us as express his kindness towards us: neither do they more clearly declare his will, than demonstrate his good-will to us.

And among all divine precepts, this especially contained in my text, doth argue the wonderful goodness of our heavenly Lawgiver, appearing both in the manner of the proposal, and in the substance of it.

Luke x. 27.

The second, saith our Lord, *is like to it;* that is, to the precept of *loving the Lord our God with all our heart:* and is not this a mighty argument of immense goodness in God, that he doth in such a manner commend this duty to us, coupling it with our main duty toward him, and requiring us with like earnestness to love our neighbour as to love himself?

He is transcendently amiable for the excellency of his nature; he, by innumerable and inestimable benefits graciously conferred on us, hath deserved our utmost affection; so that naturally there can be no obligation bearing any proportion or considerable semblance to that of loving him: yet hath he in goodness been pleased to create one, and to endue it with that privilege; making the love of a man (whom we cannot value but for *his* gifts, to whom we can owe nothing but what properly we owe to *him*)

no less obligatory, to declare it near as acceptable as the love of himself, to whom we owe all. To him, as the sole author and free donor of all our good, by just correspondence, all our mind and heart, all our strength and endeavour, are due: and reasonably might he engross them to himself, excluding all other beings from any share in them; so that we might be obliged only to fix our thoughts and set our affections on him, only to act directly for his honour and interest; saying with the holy Psalmist, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee:* yet doth he freely please to impart a share of these performances on mankind; yet doth he charge us to place our affection on one another; to place it there, indeed, in a measure so large, that we can hardly imagine a greater; according to a rule, than which none can be devised more complete or certain. SERM. XXV. Psal. lxxiii. 25.

O marvellous condescension, O goodness truly divine; which surpasseth the nature of things, which dispenseth with the highest right, and foregoeth the greatest interest that can be! Doth not God in a sort debase himself, that he might advance us? Doth he not appear to wave his own due, and neglect his own honour for our advantage? How otherwise could the love of man be capable of any resemblance to the love of God, and not stand at an infinite distance, or in an extreme disparity from it? How otherwise could we be obliged to affect or regard any thing beside the sovereign, the only goodness? How otherwise could there be any *second* or like to *that first, that great,* that peerless command, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?* Matt. xix. 17. Matt. xxii. 38.

This indeed is the highest commendation whereof any law is capable: for as to be like God is the highest praise that can be given to a person; so to resemble the divinest law of love to God is the fairest character that can be assigned of a law: the which indeed representeth it to be νόμος βασιλικὸς, as St. James calleth it; that is, a *royal* and sovereign law; exalted above all others, and bearing a sway on them. St. Paul telleth us, that *the end of the* Jam. ii. 8.

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commandment (or, the main scope of the evangelical doctrine,) is *charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience,*

1 Tim. i. 6. *and faith unfeigned;* that charity *is the sum* and substance

Rom. xiii. 8, 9. of all other duties, and that *he that loveth another hath*

Gal. v. 14. *fulfilled the* whole *law;* that charity is the chief of the

1 Cor. xiii. 13. theological virtues, and *the prime fruit of the divine Spirit;*

Gal. v. 22. and *the bond of perfection*, which combineth and consum-

Col. iii. 14. 1 Cor. xvi. 14. mateth all other graces, and the general principle of all our doings. St. Peter enjoineth us that to all other virtues we

2 Pet. i. 7. *add charity*, as the top and crown of them: and, *Above all*

1 Pet. iv. 8. *things*, saith he, *have fervent charity among yourselves.* St.

1 John iii. 23, 11. iv. 21. John calleth this law, in way of excellence, *the commandment of God;* and our Lord himself claimeth it as his peculiar

John xv. 12. John xiii. 34. precept, *This*, saith he, *is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you; A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another:* and maketh the observ-

John xiii. 35. ance of it the special cognizance of his followers, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*

These indeed are lofty commendations thereof, yet all of them may worthily veil to this; all of them seem verified in virtue of this, because God hath vouchsafed to place this command in so near adjacency to the first great law, conjoining the two tables; making charity contiguous, and, as it were, commensurate to piety.

It is true, that in many respects charity doth resemble piety; for it is the most genuine daughter of piety, thence in complexion, in features, in humour, much favouring its sweet mother: it doth consist in like dispositions and motions of soul: it doth grow from the same roots and principles of benignity, ingenuity, equity, gratitude, planted in our original constitution by the breath of God,

1 John iv. 7, 11. and improved in our hearts by the divine *Spirit of love;*

Matt. v. 45. it produceth the like fruits of beneficence toward others,

Eph. v. 1, 2. and of comfort in ourselves; it in like manner doth assimilate us to God, rendering us conformable to his nature, followers of his practice, and partakers of his felicity: it is of like use and consequence toward the regulation of our practice, and due management of our

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whole life: in such respects, I say, this law is like to the other; but it is however chiefly so for that God hath pleased to lay so great stress thereon, as to make it the other half of our religion and duty; or because, as St. John saith, *This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also;* which is to his praise a most pregnant demonstration of his immense goodness toward us.

Matt. xxii. 40. 1 John iv. 21.

But no less in the very substance of this duty will the benignity of him that prescribeth it shine forth, displaying itself in the rare beauty and sweetness of it; together with the vast benefit and utility, which it, being observed, will yield to mankind; which will appear by what we may discourse for pressing its observance. But first let us explain it, as it lieth before us expressed in the words of the text, wherein we shall consider two particulars observable: first, the object of the duty; secondly, the qualification annexed to it; the object of it, *our neighbour;* the qualification, *as ourselves.*

I. The object of charity is *our neighbour;* that is, (it being understood, as the precept now concerneth us, according to our Lord's exposition, or according to his intent and the tenor of his doctrine,) every man, with whom we have to do, or who is capable of our love, especially every Christian.

The law, as it was given to God's ancient people, did openly regard only those among them who were linked together in a holy neighbourhood or society, from which all other men being excluded were deemed strangers and foreigners; *(aliens,* as St. Paul speaketh, *from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.)* For thus the Law runneth in Leviticus, *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* where plainly *Jews* and *neighbours* are terms equivalent; other men being supposed to stand at distance without the fold or politic enclosure, which God by several ordinances had fenced, to keep that nation unmixt and separate: nor can

Eph. ii. 12. Levit. xix. 18. Levit. xx. 26, 24. Exod. xxxiii. 16. Deut. vii. 6. xiv. 2.

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it be excepted against this notion, that in the same chapter it is enjoined, *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;* for by that stranger (as the Jewish masters will interpret it) is meant *a proselyte of righteousness;* or one who, although a stranger by birth, was yet a brother in religion, having voluntarily submitted to their Law, being engaged in the same covenant, and thence admitted to the same privileges, as an adopted child of that holy family.

Levit. xix. 34.

But now, such distinctions of men being voided, and that *wall of partition* demolished, all the world is become one people; subject to the laws of one common Lord; and capable of the mercies purchased by one Redeemer. God's love to mankind did move him to send our Lord into the world, to assume human nature, and therein to become a mediator between God and men. Our Lord's kindness to all his brethren disposed him to undertake their salvation, and to expiate their sins, and *to taste death for every man;* the effect whereof is an universal reconciliation of God to the world, and an union of men together.

Eph. ii. 14. Gal. iii. 28. Acts x. 36. Tit. iii. 4. John iii. 16. 1 Tim. ii. 5. 1 John ii. 2. Heb ii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 19. Col. i. 20. Eph. i. 10. ii. 13.

Now the blood of Christ hath cemented mankind; the favour of God embracing all hath approximated and combined all together; so that now every man is our brother, not only by nature, as derived from the same stock, but by grace, as partaker of the common redemption; now God *desiring the salvation of all men*, and inviting all men to mercy, our duty must be co-extended with God's grace, and our charity must follow that of our Saviour.

1 Tim. ii. 4. Tit. ii 11. Col. i. 23.

We are therefore now to all men, that which one Jew was to another; yea more than such, our Christianity having induced much higher obligations, stricter alliances, and stronger endearments, than were those, whereby Judaism did engage its followers to mutual amity. The duties of common humanity (to which our natural frame and sense do incline us, which philosophy recommendeth and natural religion doth prescribe, being grounded upon our community of nature and cognation of blood, upon apparent equity, upon general convenience and utility) our

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religion doth not only enforce and confirm, but enhance and improve; superadding higher instances and faster ties of spiritual relation, reaching in a sort to all men, (as being in duty, in design, in remote capacity our spiritual brethren;) but in especial manner to all Christians, who actually are fellow members of the same holy fraternity, contracted by spiritual regeneration from one heavenly seed, supported by a common faith and hope, strengthened by communion in acts of devotion and charity. 1 Pet. i. 23. ii. 17.

Hereon therefore are grounded those evangelical commands, explicatory of this Law as it now standeth in force; that *as we have opportunity we should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith;* that we *should abound in love one towards another, and towards all men;* that we *should glorify God in our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, by liberally distributing to the saints, and to all men;* that we should *follow peace with all men*, should *be patient towards all men;* and *gentle toward all men*, and *shew all meekness toward all men;* and *ever follow that which is good, both among ourselves, and to all men;* that we should *make supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men*, especially for *all saints*, or all our fellow Christians; and [a]*express moderation*, or ingenuity, *to all men.* Gal. vi. 10. 1 Thess. iii. 12. 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13. Heb. xii. 24. 1 Thess. v. 14. Tit. iii 2. 1 Thess. v. 15. ἤπιον εἶναι πρὸς πάντας. 2 Tim. ii. 24.

Such is the object of our charity; and thus did our Lord himself expound it, when by a Jewish lawyer being put to resolve this question, *And who is my neighbour?* he did propound a case, or history, whereby he did extort from that Rabbi this confession, that even a Samaritan, discharging a notable office of humanity and mercy to a Jew, did thereby most truly approve himself a good neighbour to him; and consequently that reciprocal performances of such high offices were due from a Jew to a Samaritan; whence it might appear, that this relation of neighbourhood is universal and unlimited. So much for the object. 1 Tim. ii. 1. Eph vi. 18. [a]Phil. iv. 5. Luke x. 29. Πλησίον δὲ ἀνθρώπου ἑδὲν ἄλλο ἐστιν ἢ τὸ ὁμοιοπαθὲς καὶ λογικὸν ζῶον, &c. *Just. Murt contr. Tryph.* p. 320.

II. As for the qualification annexed and couched in those words, *as thyself;* that, as I conceive, may import both a rule declaring the nature, and a measure determin-

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ing the quantity, of that love which is due from us to our neighbour; the comparative term *as* implying both conformity or similitude, and commensuration or equality.

Ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς φιλίας τῇ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὁμοιῶται. *Arist. Eth.* ix. 4.

1. Loving our neighbour *as ourselves* doth import a rule, directing what kind of love we should bear and exercise toward him; or informing us that our charity doth consist in having the same affections of soul, and in performing the same acts of beneficence toward him, as we are ready by inclination, as we are wont in practice to have or to perform toward ourselves, with full approbation of our judgment and conscience, apprehending it just and reasonable so to do.

We cannot indeed better understand the nature of this duty, than by reflecting on the motions of our own heart, and observing the course of our demeanour toward ourselves; for thence infallibly we may be assured how we should stand affected, and how we should behave ourselves toward others.

Οὐ χρείας πολλῶν λόγων, οὐδὲ μακροτέρων νόμων, οὐδὲ διδασκαλίας ποικίλης· τὸ θέλημά σου γινέσθω νόμος—σύγγενὴς δικαιοῖς, σὺ γένῃ νομοθέτης τῆς σεαυτοῦ ζωῆς. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. ιγ΄.

This is a peculiar advantage of this rule, (inferring the excellent wisdom and goodness of him who framed it,) that by it very easily and certainly we may discern all the specialties of our duty, without looking abroad or having recourse to external instructions; so that by it we may be perfect lawgivers, and skilful judges, and faithful monitors to ourselves of what in any case we should do; for every one by internal experience knoweth what it is to love himself, every one is conscious how he useth to treat himself; each one consequently can prescribe and decide for himself, what he ought to do toward his neighbour; so that we are not only θεοδίδακτοι, *taught of God*, as the Apostle saith, *to love one another*; but αὐτοδίδακτοι, taught of ourselves how to exercise that duty; whence our Lord otherwhere doth propose the law of charity in these terms, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets*; that is, unto this rule all the special precepts of charity proposed in holy Scripture may be reduced.

1 Thess. iv. 9. Matt. vii. 12. Luke vi. 31. Ὃ μισεῖς, μηδενὶ ποιήσῃς. *Tob.* iv. 15. *Const. Apost.* i. 1.

Wherefore for information concerning our duty in each case and circumstance, we need only thus to consult and

interrogate ourselves, hence forming resolutions concerning our practice.

Do we not much esteem and set by ourselves? Do we not strive to maintain in our minds a good opinion of ourselves? Can any mischances befalling us, any defects observable in us, any faults committed by us induce us to slight or despise ourselves? This may teach us what regard and value we should ever preserve for our neighbour.

Do we not sincerely and earnestly desire our own welfare and advantage in every kind? Do we not heartily wish good success to our own designs and undertakings? Are we unconcerned or coldly affected in any case touching our own safety, our estate, our credit, our satisfaction or pleasure? Do we not especially, if we rightly understand ourselves, desire the health and happiness of our souls?—This doth inform us, what we should wish and covet for our neighbour.

Ὁ τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπῶν, ἅπερ αὐτῷ βούλεται ἀγαθὰ, ἀγαθὰ καὶ κείνῳ βουλήσεται. &c. *Just. Mart. contr. Tryph.* p. 321.

Have we not a sensible delight and complacency in our own prosperity? Do we ever repine at any advantages accruing to our person or condition? Are we not extremely glad to find ourselves thriving and flourishing in wealth, in reputation, in any accommodation or ornament of our state? Especially if we be sober and wise, doth not our spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue yield joyous satisfaction to us? Are we not much comforted in apprehending ourselves to proceed in a hopeful way toward everlasting felicity?—This may instruct us what content we should feel in our neighbour's prosperity, both temporal and spiritual.

Do we not seriously grieve at our own disasters and disappointments? Are we not in sad dumps, whenever we incur any damage or disgrace? Do not our diseases and pains sorely afflict us? Do we not then pity and bemoan ourselves in any want, calamity, or distress? Can we especially, if we are ourselves, without grievous displeasure apprehend ourselves enslaved to sin and satan, destitute of God's favour, exposed to endless misery?—Hence may we learn how we

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should condole and commiserate the misfortunes of our neighbour.

Do we not eagerly prosecute our own concerns? Do we not with huge vigour and industry strive to acquire all conveniencies and comforts to ourselves, to rid ourselves of all wants and molestations? Is our solicitous care or painful endeavour ever wanting toward the support and succour of ourselves in any of our needs? Are we satisfied in merely wishing ourselves well? are we not also busy and active in procuring what we affect? Especially, if we are well advised, do we not effectually provide for the weal of our soul, and supply of our spiritual necessities; labouring to rescue ourselves from ignorance and error, from the tyranny of sin, from the torture of a bad conscience, from the danger of hell?—This sheweth how ready we should be really to further our neighbour's good, ministering to him all kinds of assistance and relief suitable to his needs, both corporal and spiritual.

Are we so proud or nice, that we disdain to yield attendance or service needful for our own sustenance or convenience? do we not indeed gladly perform the meanest and most sordid offices for ourselves?—This declareth how condescensive we should be in helping our neighbour, how ready even *to wash his feet*, when occasion doth require.

Do we love to vex ourselves, or cross our own humour? do we not rather seek by all means to please and gratify ourselves?—This may warn us how innocent and inoffensive, how compliant and complacent we should be in our behaviour toward others; endeavouring *to please them in all things*, especially *for their good to edification*.

Rom. xv. 2.

Are we easily angry with ourselves, do we retain implacable grudges against ourselves, or do we execute upon ourselves mischievous revenge? are we not rather very meek and patient toward ourselves, mildly comporting with our own great weaknesses, our troublesome humours, our impertinences and follies: readily forgiving ourselves

the most heinous offences, neglects, affronts, injuries, and outrages committed by us against our own interest, honour, and welfare?—Hence may we derive lessons of meekness and patience, to be exercised toward our neighbour, in bearing his infirmities and miscarriages, in remitting any wrongs or discourtesies received from him.

Are we apt to be rude in our deportment, harsh in our language, or rigorous in our dealing toward ourselves? do we not rather in word and deed treat ourselves very softly, very indulgently? Do we use to pry for faults, or to pick quarrels with ourselves, to carp at any thing said or done by us, rashly or upon slight grounds to charge blame on ourselves, to lay heavy censures on our actions, to make foul constructions of our words, to blazon our defects, or aggravate our failings? do we not rather connive at and conceal our blemishes? do we not excuse and extenuate our own crimes?

Can we find in our hearts to frame virulent invectives, or to dart bitter taunts and scoffs against ourselves; to murder our own credit by slander, to blast it by detraction, to maim it by reproach, to prostitute it, to be deflowered by jeering and scurrilous abuse? are we not rather very jealous of our reputation, and studious to preserve it, as a precious ornament, a main fence, an useful instrument of our welfare?

Do we delight to report, or like to hear ill stories of ourselves? do we not rather endeavour all we can to stifle them; to tie the tongues and stop the ears of men against them? Hence may we be acquainted how civil and courteous in our behaviour, how fair and ingenuous in our dealing, how candid and mild in our judgment or censure, we should be toward our neighbour; how very tender and careful we should be of anywise wronging or hurting his fame.

Thus reflecting on ourselves, and making our practice toward ourselves the pattern of our dealing with others, we shall not fail to discharge what is prescribed to us in this law: and so we have here a rule of charity. But farther,

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2. Loving our neighbour as ourselves doth also import the measure of our love toward him; that it should be commensurate and equal in degree to that love which we bear and exercise toward ourselves. St. Peter once and again doth exhort us *to love one another* ἐκτενῶς, *with an outstretched affection:* and how far that affection should be stretched we are here informed; even that it should reach the farthest that can be, or to a parity with that intense love, which we do bear in heart, and express in performance toward ourselves: so that we do either bring down our self-love to such a moderation, or raise up our charity to such a fervency, that both come to be adjusted in the same even level. This is that pitch, at which we should aim and aspire; this is that perfection of charity, which our Lord recommendeth to us in that injunction, *Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

1 Pet. i. 22. iv. 8.

Matt. v. 48.

That this sense of the words is included, yea chiefly intended, divers reasons will evince: For

1. The most natural signification and common use of the phrase doth import thus much; and any one at first hearing would so understand the words.

2. It appeareth by comparing this precept with that to which it is annexed, *of loving God with all our heart and all our soul;* which manifestly designeth the quantity and degree of that love: consequently the like determination is intended in this precept, which is expressed to resemble that, or designed in like manner to qualify and bound our duty toward our neighbour.

3. If the law doth not signify thus much, it doth hardly signify any thing; not at least any thing of direction or use to us: for no man is ignorant that he is obliged to love his neighbour, but how far that love must extend is the point wherein most of us do need to be resolved, and without satisfaction in which we shall hardly do any thing: for as he that oweth money will not pay except he can tell how much it is; so to know the duty will not avail toward effectual observance of it, if its measure be not fixed.

4. Indeed, the law otherwise understood will rather be

apt to misguide than to direct us; inducing us to apprehend, that we shall satisfy its intent, and sufficiently discharge our duty, by practising charity in any low degree or mean instance. Also,

5. The former sense, which is unquestionable, doth infer and establish this; because similitude of love, morally speaking, cannot consist with inequality thereof: for if in considerable degrees we love ourselves more than others, assuredly we shall fail both in exerting such internal acts of affection, and in performing such external offices of kindness toward them, as we do exert and perform in regard to ourselves; whence this law, taken merely as a rule, demanding a confused and imperfect similitude of practice, will have no clear obligation or certain efficacy.

6. But farther to assure this exposition, I shall declare that the duty thus interpreted is agreeable to reason, and may justly be required of us upon considerations, which together will serve to press the observance of it according to such measure.

1. It is reasonable that we should thus love our neighbour as ourselves, because he is as ourselves, or really in all considerable respects the same with us: we concur with him in all that is necessary, substantial, and stable; we differ from him only in things contingent, circumstantial, and variable; in the which, of course or by chance we are liable in a small time as much to differ from ourselves: in such respects we are not the same to-day that we were yesterday, and shall be to-morrow; for we shift our circumstances as we do our clothes; our bodies are in continual flux, and our souls do much conform to their alteration; our temper and complexion do vary with our air, our diet, our conversation, our fortunes, our age; our parts grow and decay, our principles and judgments, our affections and desires are never fixed, and seldom rest long in the same place; all our outward state doth easily change face: so that if we consider the same person in youth and in age, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in distress, may we not say, *quantum mu-*

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tatus ab illo; how quite another man is he grown! Yet shall a man for such alterations surcease or abate his love to himself?—Why then in regard to the like differences shall we less affect our neighbour, who is endowed with that common nature, which alone through all those vicissitudes sticketh fast in us; who is the most express image of us, (or rather a copy, drawn by the same hand, of the same original,) another self, attired in a diverse garb of circumstances? Do we not, so far as we despise or disaffect him, by consequence slight or hate ourselves; seeing (except bare personality, or I know not what metaphysical identity,) there is nothing in him different from what is, or what may be in us?

2. It is just that we should love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because he really no less deserveth love, or because upon a fair judgment he will appear equally amiable. Justice is impartial, and regardeth things as they are in themselves, abstracting from their relation to this or that person; whence, if our neighbour seem worthy of affection no less than we, it demandeth that accordingly we should love him no less.

And what ground can there be of loving ourselves which may not as well be found in others? Is it endowments of nature, is it accomplishments of knowledge, is it ornaments of virtue, is it accoutrements of fortune? But is not our neighbour possessed of the same? is he not at least capable of them, the collation and acquist of them depending on the same arbitrary bounty of God, or upon faculties and means commonly dispensed to all? May not any man at least be as wise and as good as we?—Why then should we not esteem, why not affect him as much? Doth relation to us alter the case? is self as self lovely or valuable? doth that respect lend any worth or price to things?

1 Cor. iv. 6, 7.

Likewise, what more can justice find in our neighbour to obstruct or depress our love than it may observe in ourselves? hath he greater infirmities or defects, is he more liable to errors and miscarriages, is he guilty of worse faults than we? If without arrogance and vanity we can-

not affirm this, then are we as unworthy of love as he can be; and refusing any degree thereof to him, we may as reasonably withdraw the same from ourselves.

3. It is fit that we should be obliged to love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because all charity beneath self-love is defective, and all self-love above charity is excessive.

It is an imperfect charity which doth not respect our neighbour according to his utmost merit and worth, which doth not heartily desire his good, which doth not earnestly promote his advantage in every kind, according to our ability and opportunity: and what beyond this can we do for ourselves?

If in kind or degree we transcend this, it is not virtuous love or true friendship to ourselves, but a vain fondness or perverse dotage; proceeding from inordinate dispositions of soul, grounded on foolish conceits, begetting foul qualities and practices; envy, strife, ambition, avarice, and the like.

4. Equity requireth that we should love our neighbour to this degree, because we are apt to claim the same measure of love from others. No mean respect or slight affection will satisfy us; we cannot brook the least disregard or coldness; to love us a little is all one to us as not to love us at all: it is therefore equitable that we should be engaged to the same height of charity toward others; otherwise we should be allowed in our dealings to use double weights and measures, which is plain iniquity: what indeed can be more ridiculously absurd, than that we should pretend to receive that from others, which we are not disposed to yield to them upon the same ground and title? Prov. xx. 10.

5. It is needful that so great a charity should be prescribed, because none inferior thereto will reach divers weighty ends designed in this law: namely, the general convenience and comfort of our lives in mutual society and intercourse: for if in considerable degree we do affect ourselves beyond others, we shall be continually bickering and clashing with them about points of interest and credit; scrambling with

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them for what may be had, and clambering to get over them in power and dignity: whence all the passions annoying our souls, and all the mischiefs disturbing our lives, must needs ensue.

6. That entire love which we owe to God our Creator, and to Christ our Redeemer, doth exact from us no less a measure of charity than this: for seeing they have so clearly demonstrated themselves to bear an immense love to men, and have charged us therein to imitate them; it becometh us, in conformity, in duty, in gratitude to them, to bear the highest we can, that is, the same as we bear to ourselves: for how can we love God enough, or with all our soul, if we do not accord with him in loving his friends and relations, his servants, his children, with most entire affection?

If in God's judgment they are equal to us, if in his affection and care they have an equal share, if he in all his dealings is indifferent and impartial toward all; how can our judgment, our affection, our behaviour be right, if they do not conspire with him in the same measures?

7. Indeed the whole tenor and genius of our religion do imply obligation to this pitch of charity, upon various accounts.

It representeth all worldly goods and matters of private interest as very inconsiderable and unworthy of our affection, thereby subtracting the fuel of immoderate self-love.

It enjoineth us for all our particular concerns entirely to rely upon Providence; so barring solicitude for ourselves, and disposing an equal care for others.

It declareth every man so weak, so vile, so wretched, so guilty of sin and subject to misery, (so for all good wholly indebted to the pure grace and mercy of God,) that no man can have reason to dote on himself, or to prefer himself before others: we need not cark, or prog, or scrape for ourselves, being assured that God sufficiently careth for us.

In its accounts the fruits and recompences of love to

others in advantage to ourselves do far surpass all present interests and enjoyments; whence in effect the more or less we love others, answerably the more or less we love ourselves; so that charity and self-love are coincident, and both run together evenly in one channel.

It recommendeth to us the imitation of God's love and bounty; which are absolutely pure, without any regard, any capacity of benefit redounding to himself. Matt. v. 45.

It commandeth us heartily to love even our bitterest enemies and most cruel persecutors: which cannot be performed without a proportionable abatement of self-love.

It chargeth us not only freely to impart our substance, but willingly to expose our lives, for the good of our brethren: in which case charity doth plainly match self-love; for what hath a man more dear or precious than his life to lay out for himself? 1 John iii. 16.

It representeth all men (considering their divine extraction, and being formed after God's image; their designation for eternal glory and happiness, their partaking of the common redemption by the undertakings and sufferings of Christ, their being objects of God's tender affection and care) so very considerable, that no regard beneath the highest will befit them.

It also declareth us so nearly allied to them, and so greatly concerned in their good, (we being *all one in Christ*, and *members one of another*,) that we ought to have a perfect complacency in their welfare, and a sympathy in their adversity, as our own. Gal. iii. 28. John xvii. 21. Rom. xii. 5 1 Cor. xii. 26. John xiii. 35.

It condemneth self-love, self-pleasing, self-seeking as great faults; which yet (even in the highest excess) do not seem absolutely bad; or otherwise culpable, than as including partiality, or detracting from that equal measure of charity which we owe to others: for surely we cannot love ourselves too much, if we love others equally with ourselves; we cannot seek our own good excessively, if with the same earnestness we seek the good of others. 1 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 10. Rom. xv. 1. Phil ii. 4. 1 Cor. x. 24. xiii. 5.

It exhibiteth supernatural aids of grace, and conferreth

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that holy spirit of love, which can serve to no meaner purposes, than to quell that sorry principle of niggardly selfishness, to which corrupt nature doth incline; and to enlarge our hearts to this divine extent of goodness.

8. Lastly, many conspicuous examples proposed for our direction in this kind of practice, do imply this degree of charity to be required of us.

It may be objected to our discourse, that the duty thus understood is unpracticable, nature violently swaying to those degrees of self-love which charity can nowise reach. This exception (would time permit) I should assoil, by shewing how far, and by what means we may attain to such a practice; (how at least, by aiming at this top of perfection, we may ascend nearer and nearer thereto:) in the mean time, experience doth sufficiently evince possibility; and assuredly that may be done, which we see done before us. And so it is, pure charity hath been the root of such affections and such performances (recorded by indubitable testimony) toward others, which hardly any man can exceed in regard to himself; nor indeed hath there scarce ever appeared any heroical virtue, or memorable piety, whereof charity overbearing selfishness, and sacrificing private interest to public benefit, hath not been a main ingredient. For instance then;

Did not Abraham even prefer the good of others before his own, when he gladly did quit his country, patrimony, friends, and kindred, to pass his days in a wandering pilgrimage, upon no other encouragement than an overture of blessing on his posterity?

Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv. in Eph. Or. vii.

Did not the charity of Moses stretch thus far, when for the sake of his brethren he voluntarily did exchange the splendors and delights of a court for a condition of vagrancy and servility; *choosing rather*, as the Apostle speaketh, *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin;* did not it overstretch, when (although having been grievously affronted by them) he wished that rather his name should be *expunged from God's book*, than that their sin should abide unpardoned?

Heb. xi. 24.

Exod. xxxii. 32. Βούλομαι μετ' ἐκείνων

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Did not Samuel exercise such a charity, when being ingratefully and injuriously dismounted from his authority, he did yet retain toward that people a zealous desire of their welfare, *not ceasing earnestly to pray for them?*

ἀπολίσθαι, ἢ χωρὶς ἐκείνων σώζεσθαι ὄντως μανία, ὄντως ἔρως μίγας. *Chrys. in Eph. Or.* vii.

Did not Jonathan love David equally with himself, when for his sake he chose to incur the displeasure of his father and his king; when for his advantage he was content to forfeit the privilege of his birth, and the inheritance of a crown; when he could without envy or grudge look on the growing prosperity of his supplanter, could heartily wish his safety, could effectually protect it, could purchase it to him with his own great danger and trouble: when he, that in gallantry of courage and virtue did yield to none, was yet willing to become inferior to one born his subject, one raised from the dust, one *taken from a sheepcote;* so that unrepiningly and without disdain he could say, *Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee?*—are not these pregnant evidences, that it was truly said in the story, *The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul?*

1 Sam. xii. 23. 1 Sam. xx. 30. Ps. lxxviii. 70. 1 Sam. xxiii. 17. 1 Sam. xviii. 1. xx. 17.

Did not the Psalmist competently practise this duty, when in the sickness of his ingrateful adversaries *he clothed himself with sackcloth, he humbled his soul with fasting; he bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother?*

Psal. xxxv. 12.

Were not Elias, Jeremy, and other prophets as much concerned for the good of their countrymen as for their own, when they took such pains, when they ran such hazards, when they endured such hardships not only for them, but from them; being requited with hatred and misusage for endeavouring to reclaim them from sin, and stop them from ruin?

May not the holy Apostles seem to have loved mankind beyond themselves, when for its instruction and reformation, for reconciling it to God, and procuring its salvation, they gladly did undertake and undergo so many rough difficulties, so many formidable dangers, such irksome pains and troubles, such extreme wants and losses, such grievous ignominies and disgraces; slighting all concerns

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of their own, and relinquishing whatever was most dear to them (their safety, their liberty, their ease, their estate, their reputation, their pleasure, their very blood and breath) for the welfare of others; even of those who did spitefully malign and cruelly abuse them?

Survey but the life of one among them; mark the wearisome travels he underwent over all the earth, the solicitous cares which did possess his mind *for all the Churches*; the continual toils and drudgeries sustained by him in preaching by word and writing, in visiting, in admonishing in all pastoral employments; the imprisonments, the stripes, the reproaches, the oppositions and persecutions of every kind, and from all sorts of people, which he suffered; the pinching wants, the desperate hazards, the lamentable distresses with the which he did ever conflict: peruse those black catalogues of his afflictions registered by himself; then tell me how much his charity was inferior to his self-love? did not at least the one vie with the other, when he, for the benefit of his disciples, was content *to be absent from the Lord*, or suspended from a certain fruition of glorious beatitude; resting in this uncomfortable state, in *this fleshly tabernacle*, wherein *he groaned, being burdened*, and longing for enlargement? Did he not somewhat beyond himself love those men, for whose salvation he wished himself *accursed from Christ*, or debarred from the assured enjoyment of eternal felicity; those very men by whom he had been stoned, had been scourged, had been often beaten to extremity, from whom he had received manifold indignities and outrages?

2 Cor. xi. 23. iv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 11. Phil. i. 24. 2 Cor. v. 1, &c. Rom. ix. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. 1 Thess. ii. 15.

Did not they love their neighbours as themselves, who sold their possessions, and distributed the prices of them for relief of their indigent brethren? Did not most of the ancient saints and fathers mount near the top of this duty, of whom it is by unquestionable records testified, that they did freely bestow all their private estate and substance on the poor, devoting themselves to the service of God and edification of his people? Finally,

Acts. iv. 34.

Did not our Lord himself in our nature exemplify this

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duty, yea, by his practice far outdo his precept? For, he who from the brightest glories, from the immense riches, from the ineffable joys and felicities of his celestial kingdom, did willingly stoop down to assume the garb of a servant, to be clothed with the infirmities of flesh, to become *a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief:* he who for our sake vouchsafed to live in extreme penury and disgrace, to feel hard want, sore travail, bitter persecution, most grievous shame and anguish: he who not only did contentedly bear, but purposely did choose to be accused, to be slandered, to be reviled, to be mocked, to be tortured, to pour forth his heart-blood upon a cross, for the sake of an unprofitable, an unworthy, an impious, an ingrateful generation; for the salvation of his open enemies, of base apostates, of perverse rebels, of villainous traitors: he who, in the height of his mortal agonies, did sue for the pardon of his cruel murderers; who did send his Apostles to them, did cause so many wonders to be done before them, did furnish all means requisite to convert and save them: he that acted and suffered all this, and more than can be expressed, with perfect frankness and good-will; did he not signally love his neighbour as himself, to the utmost measure? did not in him virtue conquer nature, and charity triumph over self-love? This he did to seal and impress his doctrine; to shew us what we should do, and what we can do by his grace; to oblige us and to encourage us unto a conformity with him in this respect; for, *Walk in love*, saith the Apostle, *as Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us;* and, *This*, saith he himself, *is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you:* and how can I better conclude, than in the recommendation of such an example?

Rom. v. 6, 8, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Eph. ii. 1. Col. ii. 13. Chrys. in Eph. Or. vii. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii. Heb. xii. 2. Eph. v. 1. 1 John iii. 16. John xv. 12. xiii. 34.

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work. 2 Thess. ii. 16.

SERMON XXVI.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

MATTH. xxii. 39.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

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I HAVE formerly discoursed on these words, and then shewed how they do import two observable particulars: first a rule of our charity, or that it should be like in nature; then a measure of it, or that it should be equal in degree to the love which we do bear to ourselves. Of this latter interpretation I did assign divers reasons, urging the observance of the precept according to that notion: but one material point, scantiness of time would not allow me to consider; which is the removal of an exception, to which that interpretation is very liable, and which is apt to discourage from a serious application to the practice of this duty so expounded.

If, it may be said, the precept be thus understood, as to oblige us to love our neighbours equally with ourselves, it will prove unpracticable, such a charity being merely romantic and imaginary; for who doth, who can love his neighbour in this degree? Nature powerfully doth resist, common sense plainly doth forbid that we should do so: a natural instinct doth prompt us to love ourselves, and we are forcibly driven thereto by an unavoidable sense of pleasure and pain, resulting from the constitution of our body and soul, so that our own least good or evil are very sensible to us: whereas we have no such potent inclination to love others; we have no sense, or a very

faint one, of what another doth enjoy or endure: doth not therefore nature plainly suggest, that our neighbour's good cannot be so considerable to us as our own? especially when charity doth clash with self-love, or when there is a competition between our neighbour's interest and our own, is it possible that we should not be partial to our own side? is not therefore this precept such as if we should be commanded to fly, or to do that which natural propension will certainly hinder? SERM. XXVI.

In answer to this exception I say, first,

1. Be it so, that we can never attain to love our neighbour altogether so much as ourselves, yet may it be reasonable that we should be enjoined to do so; for

Laws must not be depressed to our imperfection, nor rules bent to our obliquity: but we must ascend toward the perfection of them, and strive to conform our practice to their exactness. If what is prescribed be according to the reason of things just and fit, it is enough, although our practice will not reach it; for what remaineth may be supplied by repentance and humility in him that should obey, by mercy and pardon in him that doth command.

In the prescription of duty it is just, that what may be required, even in rigour, should be precisely determined, though in execution of justice or dispensation of recompence consideration may be had of our weakness; whereby both the authority of our governor may be maintained, and his clemency glorified.

It is of great use, that by comparing the Law with our practice, and in the perfection of the one discerning the defect of the other, we may be humbled, may be sensible of our impotency, may thence be forced to seek the helps of grace, and the benefit of mercy.

Were the rule never so low, our practice would come beneath it; it is therefore expedient that it should be high, that at least we may rise higher in performance than otherwise we should do: for the higher we aim, the nearer we shall go to the due pitch; as he that aimeth at heaven, although he cannot reach it, will

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yet shoot higher than he that aimeth only at the house-top.

The height of duty doth prevent sloth and decay in virtue, keeping us in wholesome exercise and in continual improvement, while we be always climbing toward the top, and straining unto farther attainment: the sincere prosecution of which course, as it will be more profitable unto us, so it will be no less acceptable to God, than if we could thoroughly fulfil the law; for in judgment God will only reckon upon the sincerity and earnestness of our endeavour: so that if we have done our best, it will be taken as if we had done all. *Our labour will not be lost in the Lord;* for the degrees of performance will be considered, and he that hath done his duty in part shall be proportionably recompensed; according to that of St. Paul, *Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own work.* Hence sometimes we are enjoined to *be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*, and to *be holy as God is holy;* otherwise to *go on to perfection*, and to *press toward the mark;* which precepts in effect do import the same thing; but the latter implieth the former, although in attainment impossible, yet in attempt very profitable: and surely he is likely to write best, who proposeth to himself the fairest copy for his imitation.

Phil. iii. 12.

1 Cor. v. 28. 1 Thess. i. 13. Heb. vi. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 8. Matt. v. 48. xix. 21. 1 Pet. i. 16. Col. iv. 12. Heb. vi. 1 Phil. 3.

In fine, if we do act what is possible, or as we can do conform to the rule of duty, we may be sure that no impossibility of this, or of any other sublime law, can prejudice us.

I say, of any other law; for it is not only this law to which this exception may be made, but many others, perhaps every one evangelical law, are alike repugnant to corrupt nature, and seem to surmount our ability.

But neither is the performance of this task so impossible, or so desperately hard, (if we take the right course, and use proper means toward it,) as is supposed: as may somewhat appear, if we will weigh the following considerations.

1. Be it considered, that we may be mistaken in our account, when we do look on the impossibility or diffi-

culty of such a practice, as it appeareth at present, before we have seriously attempted, and in a good method, by due means, earnestly laboured to achieve it: for many things cannot be done at first, or with a small practice, which by degrees and a continued endeavour may be effected; divers things are placed at a distance, so that without passing through the interjacent way we cannot arrive at them; divers things seem hard before trial, which afterward prove very easy: it is impossible to fly up to the top of a steeple, but we may ascend thither by steps; we cannot get to Rome without crossing the seas, and travelling through France or Germany; it is hard to comprehend a subtile theorem in geometry, if we pitch on it first; but if we begin at the simple principles, and go forward through the intermediate propositions, we may easily attain a demonstration of it: it is hard to swim, to dance, to play on an instrument; but a little trial, or a competent exercise will render those things easy to us: so may the practice of this duty seem impossible, or insuperably difficult, before we have employed divers means, and voided divers impediments; before we have inured our minds and affections to it; before we have tried our forces in some instances thereof, previous to others of a higher strain, and nearer the perfection of it.

If we would set ourselves to exercise charity in those instances, whereof we are at first capable without much reluctancy, and thence proceed toward others of a higher nature, we may find such improvement, and taste such content therein, that we may soon arise to incredible degrees thereof; and at length perhaps we may attain to such a pitch, that it will seem to us base and vain to consider our own good before that of others, in any sensible measure; and that nature which now so mightily doth contest in favour of ourselves, may in time give way to a better nature, born of custom, affecting the good of others. Let not therefore a present sense or experience raise in our minds a prejudice against the possibility or practicableness of this duty.

2. Let us consider, that in some respects, and in divers

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instances, it is very feasible to love our neighbour no less than ourselves.

1 Tim. i. 6. We may love our neighbour truly and sincerely, *out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned*, as St. Paul doth prescribe; or according to St. Peter's in-

1 Pet. i. 22. (Rom. xii. 9.) junction, *from a pure heart love one another fervently:* and in this respect we can do no more toward ourselves; for truth admitteth no degrees, sincerity is a pure and complete thing, exclusive of all mixture or alloy.

As to external acts at least it is plain that charity toward others may reach self-love; for we may be as serious, as vigorous, as industrious in acting for our neighbour's good, as we can be in pursuing our own designs and interests: for reason can easily manage and govern external practice; and common experience sheweth the matter to this extent practicable, seeing that often men do employ as much diligence on the concerns of others, as they can do on their own, (being able to do no more than their best in either case:) wherefore in this respect charity may vie with selfishness; and practising thus far may be a step to mount higher.

Also rational consideration will enable us to perform some interior acts of charity in the highest degree; for if we do but (as without much difficulty we may do) apply our mind to weigh the qualities and the actions of our neighbour, we may thence obtain a true opinion and just esteem of him; and, secluding gross folly or flattery of ourselves, how can we in that respect or instance be more kind or benign to ourselves?

Is it not also within the compass of our ability to repress those passions of soul, the eruption whereof tendeth to the wrong, damage, and offence of our neighbour; in regard to which practice St. Paul affirmeth, that the law may be

Rom. xiii. 10. fulfilled: *Love*, saith he, *worketh no evil to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law?* And what more in this respect can we perform for ourselves?

3. We may consider, that commonly we see men inclined by other principles to act as much or more for the sake of others, as they would for themselves?

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Moral honesty hath inclined some, ambition and popularity have excited others, to encounter the greatest dangers, to attack the greatest difficulties, to expose their safety, to sacrifice their lives for the welfare of their country [a].

Common friendship hath often done as much, and brutish love (that *mad friendship*, as Seneca calleth it) commonly doeth far more: for what will not a fond lover undertake and achieve for his minion, although she really be the worst enemy he can have? yet for such a snake will he not lavish his estate, prostitute his honour, abandon his ease, hazard his safety, shipwreck his conscience, forfeit his salvation? What may not a Delilah obtain of her Samson, a Cleopatra of her Anthony, how prejudicial soever it be to his own interest and welfare?

Insana amicitia. *Sen. Ep.* ix.

Chrys. in Eph p. 797.

Why then may not a principle of charity, grounded on so much better reason, and backed by so much stronger motives, be conceived able to engage men to the like practice? why may not a man be disposed to do that out of a hearty good-will, which he can do out of vain conceit, or vicious appetite? why shall other forces overbear nature, and the power of charity be unable to match it?

4. Let us consider, that those dispositions of soul which usually with so much violence do thwart the observance of this precept, are not ingredients of true self-love, by the which we are directed to regulate our charity; but a spurious brood of our folly and pravity, which imply not a sober love of ourselves, but a corrupt fondness toward an idol of our fancy mistaken for ourselves.

A high conceit of our worth or ability, of our fortune or worldly state, of our works and achievements; a great complacence or confidence in some endowment or advantage belonging to us, a stiff adherence to our own will or humour, a greedy appetite to some particular interest or base pleasure; these are those, not attendants of

[a] Ἀληθὶς δὲ τὸ περὶ τὴν σπουδαίαν καὶ τὸ τῶν φίλων ἕνεκα πολλὰ πράττειν καὶ τὴν πατρίδος, κἂν δεῖ ὑπεραποθνήσκειν. *Arist. Eth.* ix. 8.

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natural self-love, but issues of unnatural depravedness in judgment and affections, which render our practice so exorbitant in this regard, making us seem to love ourselves so immoderately, so infinitely; so contracting our souls, and drawing them inwards, that we appear indisposed to love our neighbour in any considerable degree: if these (as by serious consideration they may be) were avoided, or much abated, it would not be found so grievous a matter to love our neigbour as ourselves; for that sober love remaining behind, to which nature inclineth, and which reason approveth, would rather help to promote than yield any obstacle to our charity: if such perverse selfishness were checked and depressed, and natural kindness cherished and advanced, then true self-love and charity would compose themselves into near a just poise.

5. Indeed (which we may farther consider) our nature is not so absolutely averse or indisposed to the practice of such charity, as to those may seem who view it slightly, either in some particular instances, or in ordinary practice; nature hath furnished us with strong instincts for the defence and sustenance of our life; and common practice is depraved by ill education and custom: these some men poring on do imagine no room left for charity in the constitution of men; but they consider not that one of these may be so moderated, and the other so corrected, that charity may have a fair scope in men's hearts and practice; and they slip over divers pregnant marks of our natural inclination thereto.

Man having received his soul from the breath of God, and being framed after the image of his most benign parent, there do yet abide in him some features resembling God, and relics of the divine original; there are in us seeds of ingenuity, of equity, of pity, of benignity, which being cultivated by sober consideration and good use, under the conduct and aid of heavenly grace, will produce noble fruits of charity.

The frame of our nature so far disposeth us thereto, that our bowels are touched with sensible pain upon the view of any calamitous object; our fancy is disturbed at

the report of any disaster befalling any person; we can hardly see or read a tragedy without motions of compassion. SERM. XXVI.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency at first sight, without any discursive reflection, doth obtain approbation and applause from us; being no less grateful and amiable to the mind than beauty to our eyes, harmony to our ears, fragrancy to our smell, and sweetness to our palate: and to the same mental sense malignity, cruelty, harshness, all kinds of uncharitable dealing are very disgustful and loathsome.

There wanteth not any commendation to procure a respect for charity, nor any invective to breed abhorrence of uncharitableness; nature sufficiently prompting to favour the one, and to detest the other. Ὅσῳ τὸν φιλανθρώπους ἐπαινοῦμεν. *Arist. Eth.* viii. 1.

The practice of the former in common language hath ever been styled humanity; and the disposition from whence it floweth is called good nature: the practice of the latter is likewise termed inhumanity, and its source ill-nature; as thwarting the common notions and inclinations of mankind, divesting us of our manhood, and rendering us a sort of monsters among men.

No quality hath a clearer repute, or is commonly more admired, than generosity, which is a kind of natural charity, or hath a great spice thereof: no disposition is more despised among men than niggardly selfishness; whence commonly men are ashamed to avow self-interest as a principle of their actions, (rather fathering them on some other cause,) as being conscious to themselves that it is the basest of all principles [b].

Whatever the censurers and detractors of human nature do pretend, yet even themselves do admire pure beneficence, and contemn selfishness; for, if we look to the bottom of their intent, it is hence they are bent to slander mankind as void of good nature, because out of

[b] Ἐπιτίμῶσι γὰρ τοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μάλιστα ἀγαπῶσι, ᾗ ὡς ἐν αἰσχρῷ φιλαύτους ἀποκαλοῦσι. *Arist.* ix. 8.

Ὅσῳ ἂν βελτίων ᾖ, μᾶλλον διὰ τὸ καλὸν, ἕ φίλου ἕνεκα, τὸ δὲ αὐτῦ παρίησι. *Ibid.*

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malignity they would not allow it a quality so excellent and divine.

Wherefore, according to the general judgment and conscience of men, (to omit other considerations,) our nature is not so averse from charity, or destitute of propensions thereto; and therefore cherishing the natural seeds of it, we may improve it to higher degrees.

6. But supposing the inclinations of nature, as it now standeth in its depraved and crazy state, do so mightily obstruct the practice of this duty in the degree specified, so that however we cannot by any force of reason or philosophy attain to desire so much or relish so well the good of others as our own; yet we must remember, that a subsidiary power is by the divine mercy dispensed, able to control and subdue nature to a compliance, to raise our practice above our natural forces. We havea like averseness to other spiritual duties, (to the loving God with all our hearts, to the mortifying of our flesh and carnal desires, to the contempt of worldly things, and placing our happiness in spiritual goods;) yet we are able to perform them by the succour of grace, and in virtue of that omnipotency which St. Paul assumed to himself when he said, *I can do all things by Christ enabling me.*

Phil. iv. 13. ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντι 2 Tim. i. 7.

If we can get *the Spirit of love*, (and assuredly we may get it, if we carefully will seek it, with constant fervency imploring it from him, who hath promised to bestow it on those that ask it,) it will infuse into our minds that light whereby we shall discern the excellency of this duty, together with the folly and baseness of that selfishness which crosseth it; it will kindle in our hearts charitable affections, disposing us to wish all good to our neighbour, and to feel pleasure therein; it will render us *partakers of that divine nature*, which so will guide and urge us in due measure to affect the benefit of others, as now corrupt nature doth move us unmeasureably to covet our own; being supported and elevated by its virtue, we may, surmounting the clogs of fleshly sense and conceit, soar up to the due pitch of charity; being θεοδίδακτοι, *taught of God to love one another;* and endowed with

1 Thess. iv. 9.

the fruits of the Spirit, which are *love, gentleness, goodness, meekness*; and *created according to God in Christ Jesus* to the practice of answerable *good words*. Gal. v. 22. Eph. v. 9. Col. iii. 12. Eph iv. 24. ii. 10.

7. There are divers means conducible to the abatement of difficulty in this practice, which I shall propose, referring the matter to issue upon due trial of them.

1. Let us carefully weigh the value of those things which immoderate self-love doth affect in prejudice to charity, together with the worth of those which charity doth set in balance to them.

Aristotle himself doth observe, that the ground of culpable self-love, scraping, scrambling, scuffling for particular interest, is men's high esteem and passion for, and greedy appetite of wealth, of honours, of corporeal pleasures; whereas virtuous persons, not admiring those things, will constantly act for honesty sake, and out of love to their friends or country; wherein although they most really benefit and truly gratify themselves, yet are they not blamed for selfishness[c].

And so indeed it is: if we rightly did apprehend the infinite vanity of all worldly goods, the meanness of private concerns, the true despicableness of all those honours, those profits, those delights on which commonly men do so dote, we should not be so fond or jealous of them, as to scrape or scuffle for them, envying or grudging them to others; if we did conceive the transcendent worth of future rewards allotted to this and other virtues, the great considerableness of public good at which charity aimeth, the many advantages which may accrue to us from our neighbour's welfare, (entertained with complacence, and wisely accommodated to our use,) we should not be so averse from tendering his good as our own.

2. Let us consider our real state in the world, in de-

[c] Οἱ μὲν οὖν εἰς ὀνειδῶ ἄγοντες αὐτὸ, φιλαύτους καλοῦσι τὲς ἑαυτοῖς ἀπονέμοντας τὸ πλεῖστον ἐν χρήμασι, καὶ τιμαῖς, καὶ ἡδοναῖς ταῖς σωματικαῖς· τούτων γὰρ οἱ πολλοὶ ὀρέγονται, καὶ ἐσπουδάκασι περὶ αὐτὰ, ὡς ἄριστα ὄντα· διὸ καὶ περιμάχητά ἐστιν· οἱ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα πλεονέκται χαρίζονται ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, καὶ ὅλως τοῖς πάθεσι, καὶ τῷ ἀλόγῳ τῆς ψυχῆς·—δικαίως δὴ τοῖς οὕτω φίλαυτοις ὀνειδίζεται. *Arist. Eth.* ix. 8. Vid. tot.

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pendence upon the pleasure and Providence of Almighty God.

If we look upon ourselves as subsisting only by our own care and endeavour, without any other patronage or help, it may thence prove hard to regard the interests of others as comparable to our own; seeing then, in order to our living with any convenience, it is necessary that we should be solicitous for our own preservation and sustenance, that will engage us to contend with others as competitors for the things we need, and uncapable otherwise to attain: but if (as we ought to do, and the true state of things requireth,) we consider ourselves as subsisting under the protection, and by the providence of God, who no less careth for us than for others, and no less for others than for us; (for, as the Wise Man saith, he *careth for all alike;*) who recommendeth to us a being mutually concerned each for other, and is engaged to keep us from suffering thereby; who commandeth us to disburden our cares upon himself; who assuredly will the better provide for us, as we do more further the good of others: if we do consider thus, it will deliver us from solicitude concerning our subsistence and personal accommodations, whence we may be free to regard the concerns of others, with no less application than we do regard our own.

Ὁμοίως δὲ προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων. *Sap.* vi. 7.

As living under the same government and laws (being members of one commonwealth, one corporation, one family) disposeth men not only willingly but earnestly to serve the public interest, beyond any hopes of receiving thence any particular advantage answerable to their pain and care; so considering ourselves as members of the world, and of the Church, under the governance and patronage of God, may disengage us from immoderate respect of private good, and incline us to promote the common welfare.

3. There is one plain way of rendering this duty possible, or of perfectly reconciling charity to self-love; which is, a making the welfare of our neighbour to be our own: which if we can do, then easily may we desire it more seriously, then may we promote it with the

greatest zeal and vigour; for then it will be an instance of self-love to exercise charity; then both these inclinations conspiring will march evenly together, one will not extrude nor depress the other. SERM. XXVI.

It may be hard, while our concerns appear divided, not to prefer our own; but when they are coincident, or conspire together, the ground of that partiality is removed.

Nor is this an imaginary course, but grounded in reason, and thereby reducible to practice: for considering the manifold bands of relation (natural, civil, or spiritual) between men, as naturally of the same kind and blood, as civilly members of the same society, as spiritually linked in one brotherhood; considering the mutual advantages derivable from the wealth and welfare of each other, (in way of needful succour, advice, and comfort, of profitable commerce, of pleasant conversation;) considering the mischiefs which from our neighbour's indigency and affliction we may incur, they rendering him as a wild beast, unsociable, troublesome, and formidable to us; considering that we cannot be happy without good nature, and good humour, and that good nature cannot behold any sad object without pity and dolorous resentment, good humour cannot subsist in prospect of such objects; considering that charity is an instrument, whereby we may apply all our neighbour's good to ourselves, it being ours, if we can find complacence therein; it may appear reasonable to reckon all our neighbour's concerns to our account.

That this is practicable, experience may confirm; for we may observe, that men commonly do thus appropriate the concerns of others, resenting the disasters of a friend or of a relation with as sensible displeasure as they could their own; and answerably finding as high a satisfaction in their good fortune. Yea many persons do feel more pain by compassion for others, than they could do in sustaining the same evils; divers can with a stout heart undergo their own afflictions, who are melted with those of a friend or brother. Seeing then in true judgment

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humanity doth match any other relation, and Christianity far doth exceed all other alliances, why may we not on them ground the like affections and practices, if reason hath any force, or consideration can any wise sway in our practice?

4. It will greatly conduce to the perfect observance of this rule, to the depression of self-love, and advancement of charity to the highest pitch, if we do studiously contemplate ourselves, strictly examining our conscience, and seriously reflecting on our unworthiness and vileness; the infirmities and defects of nature, the corruptions and defilements of our soul, the sins and miscarriages of our lives: which doing, we shall certainly be far from admiring or doting on ourselves; but rather, as Job did, we shall *condemn* and *abhor ourselves:* when we see ourselves so deformed and ugly, how can we be amiable in our own eyes? how can we more esteem or affect ourselves than others, of whose unworthiness we can hardly be so conscious or sure? What place can there be for that vanity and folly, for that pride and arrogance, for that partiality and injustice, which are the sources of immoderate self-love?

Job ix. 20. xlii. 6.

5. And lastly, we may from many conspicuous experiments and examples be assured that such a practice of this duty is not impossible; but these I have already produced and urged in the precedent discourse, and shall not repeat them again.

SERMON XXVII.

THE NATURE, PROPERTIES, AND ACTS OF CHARITY.

EPHES. v. 2.

And walk in love.

ST. Paul telleth us, that *the end of the commandment* (or the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) *is charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;* that charity is a general principle of all good practice; (*let all your things be done in charity;*) that it is the sum and abridgment of all other duties, so that *he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the whole law;* that it is *the chief* of the theological virtues; *the prime fruit of the divine Spirit* and *the band of perfection*, which combineth and consummateth all other graces. SERM. XXVII. 1 Tim. i. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 14. Gal. v. 14. Rom. xiii. 8, 9. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Gal. v. 22. Col. iii. 14.

St. Peter enjoineth us that to all other virtues we should add charity, as the top and crown of them; and, *Above all things*, saith he, *have fervent charity among yourselves.* 2 Pet. i. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

St. James styleth the law of charity νόμον βασιλικὸν, *the royal*, or sovereign, *law.* Jam. ii. 8.

St. John calleth it, in way of excellence, *the commandment of God; This is his commandment, that we should love one another.* 1 John iii. 23, 11. iv. 21.

Our Lord claimeth it for his peculiar law; *This is my commandment; and a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.* And he maketh the observance of it the special badge and cognizance of his followers; John xv. 12. xiii. 34.

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By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.

John xiii. 35.

It being therefore a duty of so grand importance, it is most requisite that we should well understand it, and faithfully observe it; to which purposes I shall, by God's assistance, endeavour to confer somewhat, first by explaining its nature, then by pressing the observance of it by several inducements.

The nature of it will, as I conceive, be best understood by representing the several chief acts, which it compriseth or implieth as necessary prerequisites, or essential ingredients, or inseparable adherents to it; some internally resident in the soul, others discharged in external performance; together with some special properties of it. And such are those which follow.

I. *Loving our neighbour* doth imply, that we should value and esteem him: this is necessary, for affection doth follow opinion; so that we cannot like any thing which we do not esteem, or wherein we do not apprehend some considerable good, attractive of affection; that is not amiable, which is wholly contemptible; or so far as it is such.

But in right judgment no man is such; for the Wise Man telleth us, that *he that despiseth his neighbour, sinneth;* and, *He is void of understanding that despiseth his neighbour:* but no man is guilty of sin or folly for despising that which is wholly despicable.

Prov. xiv. 21.

Prov. xi. 12.

It is indeed true, that every man is subject to defects, and to mischances, apt to breed contempt, especially in the minds of vulgar and weak people; but no man is really despicable. For,

Every man living hath stamped on him the venerable image of his glorious Maker, which nothing incident to him can utterly deface.

Every man is of a divine extraction, and allied to Heaven by nature and by grace; as the son of God, and brother of God incarnate. *If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and*

Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15.

when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb? SERM. XXVII.

Every man is endued with that celestial faculty of reason, *inspired by the Almighty*, (for, *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*,) and hath an immortal spirit residing in him; or rather is himself an angelical spirit dwelling in a visible tabernacle. Job xxxii. 8.

Every man was originally designed and framed for a fruition of eternal happiness.

Every man hath an interest in the common redemption, purchased by the blood of the Son of God, who *tasted death for every one.*

Every man is capable of sovereign bliss, and hath a crown of endless glory offered to him.

In fine, every man, and all men alike, antecedently to their own will and choice, are the objects of his love, of his care, of his mercy; who is *loving unto every man, and whose mercy is over all his works;* who *hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike;* who *is rich,* in bounty and mercy, *toward all that call upon him.* Ps. cxlv. 9. Job xxxiv. 19. Wisd. vi. 8. Rom. x. 12. iii. 22.

How then can any man be deemed contemptible, having so noble relations, capacities, and privileges? How a man standeth in esteem with God Elihu telleth us; *God,* saith he, *is mighty, and despiseth not any:* although he be so mighty, so excellent in perfection, so infinitely in state exalted above all, yet doth not he slight any; and how can we contemn those, whom the certain voucher and infallible judge of worth deigneth to value? Indeed God so valued every man as to take great care, to be at great cost and trouble, to stoop down from heaven, to assume mortal flesh, to endure pinching wants and sore distresses, to *taste death for every one.* Job xxxvi. 5. Ps. lxix. 33.

We may ask with St. Paul, *Why dost thou set at nought thy brother?* Rom. xiv. 10.

Is it for the lowness of his condition, or for any misfortune that hath befallen him? But are not the best men, are Jam. ii. 5.

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not all men, art not thou thyself obnoxious to the like? Hath not God declared that he hath a special regard to such? And are not such things commonly disposed by his hand with a gracious intent?

Ps. xxxvii. 33. cxlvi. 9.

Is it for meanness of parts, or abilities, or endowments? But are not these the gifts of God, absolutely at his disposal, and arbitrarily distributed or preserved; so that thou who art so wise in thy own conceit to-day, mayest, by a disease, or from a judgment, deserved by thy pride, become an idiot to-morrow? Have not many good, and therefore many happy men, wanted those things?

1 Cor. i. 26.

Is it for moral imperfections or blemishes; for vicious habits, or actual misdemeanours? These indeed are the only debasements and disparagements of a man; yet do they not expunge the characters of Divinity impressed on his nature; and he may by God's mercy recover from them. And are not we ourselves, if grace do not uphold us, liable to the same? Yea, may we not, if without partiality or flattery we examine ourselves, discern the same within us, or other defects equivalent? And, however, is not pity rather due to them than contempt? Whose character was it, that *they trusted they were righteous, and despised others?* That the most palpable offender should not be quite despised, God had a special care in his Law, for that end moderating punishment, and restraining the number of stripes; *If*, saith the Law, *the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.*

Luke xviii 9. xvi. 15.

Deut. xxv. 2, 3.

We may consider that the common things, both good and bad, wherein men agree, are far more considerable than the peculiar things wherein they differ; to be a man is much beyond being a lord, or a wit, or a philosopher; to be a Christian doth infinitely surpass being an emperor, or a learned clerk; to be a sinner is much worse than to be a beggar, or an idiot. The agreement of men is in the substance and body of things; the difference is in a cir-

cumstance, a fringe, or a shadow about them; so that we cannot despise another man, without reflecting contempt on ourselves, who are so very like him, and not considerably better than he, or hardly can without arrogance pretend to be so.

We may therefore, and reason doth require that we should value our neighbour; and it is no impossible or unreasonable precept which St. Peter giveth us, to *honour all men;* and with it a charitable mind will easily comply: it ever will descry something valuable, something honourable, something amiable in our neighbour; it will find somewhat of dignity in the meanest, somewhat of worth in the basest, somewhat hopeful in the most degenerate of men; it therefore will not absolutely slight or scorn any man whatever, looking on him as an abject or forlorn wretch, unworthy of consideration.

1 Pet. ii. 17.

1 Cor. xiii. 7.

It is indeed a point of charity to see more things estimable in others than in ourselves; or to be apprehensive of more defects meriting disesteem in ourselves than in others; and consequently in our opinion to prefer others before us, according to those apostolical precepts, *Be kindly affected one toward another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Be subject one to another.*

Rom. xii. 10.

Phil. ii. 3.

1 Pet. v. 5.

II. Loving our neighbour doth imply a sincere and earnest desire of his welfare, and good of all kinds, in due proportion: for it is a property of love, that it would have its object most worthy of itself, and consequently that it should attain the best state whereof it is capable, and persist firm therein; to be fair and plump, to flourish and thrive without diminution or decay; this is plain to experience in respect to any other thing (a horse, a flower, a building, or any such thing,) which we pretend to love: wherefore charity should dispose us to be thus affected to our neighbour; so that we do not look upon his condition or affairs with an indifferent eye or cold heart, but are much concerned for him, and put forth hearty wishes for his interests: we should wish him adorned with all virtue, and accomplished with

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all worthy endowments of soul; we should wish him prosperous success in all his designs, and a comfortable satisfaction of his desires; we should wish him with alacrity of mind to reap the fruits of his industry, and to enjoy the best accommodations of his life. Not formally and in compliment, as the mode is, but really and with a cordial sense, upon his undertaking any enterprise, we should wish him good speed; upon any prosperous success of his endeavours, we should bid him joy; wherever he is going, whatever he is doing, we should wish him peace and the presence of God with him: we should tender his health, his safety, his quiet, his reputation, his wealth, his prosperity in all respects; but especially with peculiar ardency we should desire his final welfare, and the happiness of his soul, that being incomparably his chief concern.

Hence readily should we pour forth our prayers, which are the truest expressions of good desire, for the welfare of our neighbour, to him who is able to work and bestow it.

Such was the charity of St. Paul for his countrymen, signified in those words, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved;* such was his love to the Philippians, *God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ: and this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.*

Rom. x. 1.

ἐπιποθῶ ὑμᾶς. Phil. i. 8.

2 Cor. xiii. 9.

Such was St. John's charity to his friend Gaius, to whom he said, *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayst prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

3 John 2.

Such is the charity, which we are enjoined to express toward all men, by *praying for all men*, in conformity to the charity of God, who *will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

1 Tim. ii. 3.

Such is the charity we are commanded to use toward our enemies, *blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who despitefully use us, and persecute us;* the which was exemplified by our Lord, by St. Stephen, by all the holy Apostles.

Matt. v. 44. Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. iv. 12.

III. Charity doth imply a complacence or delighful satisfaction in the good of our neighbour; this is consequent on the former property, for that joy naturally doth result from events agreeable to our desire: charity hath a good eye, which is not offended or dazzled with the lustre of its neighbour's virtue, or with the splendour of his fortune, but vieweth either of them steadily with pleasure, as a very delightful spectacle; it beholdeth him to prosper and flourish, to grow in wealth and repute, not only without envious repining, but with gladsome content: its property is *to rejoice with them that rejoice;* to partake of their enjoyments, to feast in their pleasures, to triumph in their success. Rom. xii. 15.

As one member doth feel the health and the delight which another immediately doth enjoy; so hath a charitable man a sensible complacence in the welfare and joy of his neighbour. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

His prosperity of any kind, in proportion to its importance, doth please him; but especially his spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue doth yield matter of content; and his good deeds he beholdeth with abundant satisfaction.

This is that instance of charity which St. Paul so frequently doth express in his Epistles, declaring the extreme joy he did feel in the faith, in the virtue, in the orderly conversation of those brethren to whom he writeth. 2 Cor. xiii. 9. Phil. ii. 2. iv. 1. 1 Thess. iii. 9. ii. 19.

This charity possessed St. John, when he said, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.* 3 John 4.

This is the charity of heaven, which doth even cheer the angels, and doth enhance the bliss of the blessed spirits there; of whom it is said, *There is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth.* Hence this is the disposition of charitable persons, sincerely to congratulate any good occurrence to their neighbour; they are ready to conspire in rendering thanks and praise to the Author of their welfare, taking the good conferred on their neighbour as a blessing and obligation on themselves; so that they upon such occasions are apt to say with St. Paul, *What thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we* Luke xv. 7, 10. 1 Thess. iii. 9.

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joy for your sakes before God? and, *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and that the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth:* and, *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him.*

2 Thess. i. 3. 1 Cor. i. 4, 5. (Phil. i. 3. Rom. i. 8. Eph. i. 16. Col. i. 3. 1 Thess. i. 2.)

It is a precept of St. Paul, *Give thanks always* ὑπὲρ πάντων; which is translated *for all things*, but it might as well be rendered *for all persons*, according to that injunction, *I exhort, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men:* not only prayers are to be made, but thanksgivings are to be offered for all men, out of general charity.

Eph. v. 20. 1 Tim. ii. 1.

IV. Correspondently, love of our neighbour doth imply condolency and commiseration of the evils befalling him: for what we love, we cannot without displeasure behold lying in a bad condition, sinking into decay, or in danger to perish; so, to a charitable mind, the bad state of any man is a most unpleasant and painful sight.

It is the property of charity *to mourn with those that mourn;* not coldly, but passionately, (for it is *to weep with those that weep,*) resenting every man's case with an affection suitable thereto, and as he doth himself resent it.

Κλαίειν. Rom. xii. 15.

Is any man fallen into disgrace? charity doth hold down its head, is abashed and out of countenance, partaking of his shame: is any man disappointed of his hopes or endeavours? charity crieth out *alas*, as if it were itself defeated: is any man afflicted with pain or sickness? charity looketh sadly, it sigheth and groaneth, it fainteth and languisheth with him: is any man pinched with hard want? charity if it cannot succour, it will condole: doth ill news arrive? charity doth hear it with an unwilling ear and a sad heart, although not particularly concerned in it. The sight of a wreck at sea, of a field spread with carcases, of a country desolated, of houses burnt and cities ruined, and of the like calamities incident to mankind, would touch the bowels of any man; but the very report

of them would affect the heart of charity. It doth not suffer a man with comfort or ease to enjoy the accommodations of his own state, while others before him are in distress; it cannot be merry while any man in presence is sorrowful: it cannot seem happy while its neighbour doth appear miserable: it hath a share in all the afflictions which it doth behold or hear of, according to that instance in St. Paul of the Philippians, *Ye have done well, that ye did communicate with* (or partake in) *my afflictions*; and according to that precept, *Remember those which are in bonds, as bound with them.* SERM. XXVII. Συγκοινωνήσαντες. Heb. xiii. 3.

Such was the charity of Job; *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?* Job xxx. 25.

Such was the charity of the Psalmist, even toward his ingrateful enemies; *They*, saith he, *rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul;* but as for me, when they were sick, *my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother; I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.* Ps. xxxv. 12, 13, 14.

Such was the charity of St. Paul; *Who is weak*, said he, *and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* with fervent compassion. 2 Cor. xi. 29.

Such was the charity of our Saviour; which so reigned in his heart, that no passion is so often attributed to him as this of pity, it being expressed to be the motive of his great works. *Jesus*, saith St. Matthew, *went forth, and saw a great multitude,* καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, *and was moved* (in his bowels) *with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick*; and, *I have compassion on the multitude, because they have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way*: and, *Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes*: and *Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him*, (the leper,) *and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean*: and, *When the Lord saw her*, (the widow of Nain, whose son was carried out,) *he had compassion on her*: and, *He beheld the city, and wept over it*, considering the miseries impendent on it, as a just punishment of their Matt. xiv. 14. Σπλαγχνίζομαι. Matt. xv. 32. xx. 34. Mark i. 41. Luke vii. 13. Luke xix. 41.

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outrageous injuries against himself; and when the two good sisters did bewail their brother Lazarus, *He groaned in spirit, and was troubled;* and *wept* with them: whence the Jews did collect, *Behold how he loved him!*

John xi. 33, 35, 36.

Thus any calamity or misfortune befalling his neighbour doth raise distasteful regret and commiseration in a charitable soul; but especially moral evils (which indeed are the great evils, in comparison whereto nothing else is evil) do work that effect: to see men dishonour and wrong their Maker, to provoke his anger, and incur his disfavour; to see men abuse their reason, and disgrace their nature; to see men endamage their spiritual estate, to endanger the loss of their souls, to discost from their happiness, and run into eternal ruin, by distemper of mind and an inordinate conversation; this is most afflictive to a man endued with any good degree of charity. Could one see a man sprawling on the ground, weltering in his blood, with gaping wounds, gasping for breath, without compassion? And seeing the condition of him that lieth grovelling in sin, weltering in guilt, wounded with bitter remorse and pangs of conscience, nearly obnoxious to eternal death, is far worse and more deplorable; how can it but touch the heart of a charitable man, and stir his bowels with compassionate anguish?

Such was the excellent charity of the holy Psalmist, signified in those ejaculations, *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word:* and, *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.*

Ps. cxix. 158. cxix. 136.

Such was the charity of St. Paul toward his incredulous and obdurate countrymen, (notwithstanding their hatred and ill treatment of himself.) the which he so earnestly did aver in those words, *I say the truth, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart* for them.

Rom. ix. 1, 2.

Such was the charity of our Lord, which disposed him as to a continual sense of men's evils, so upon particular occasions to grieve at their sins and spiritual wants; as

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when the Pharisees maligned him for his doing good, he, it is said, did συλλυπεῖσθαι, *grieve* (or condole) *for the hardness of their heart*; and, *When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd*: and when *he wept over Jerusalem*, because it did not *know in its day the things which belonged to its peace*, (either temporal, or eternal.)

Mark iii. 5. Matt. ix. 36. Luke xix. 41.

This is that charity, which God himself in a wonderful and incomprehensible manner doth exemplify to us: for he is *the Father of pities*; πολύσπλαγχνος, *full of bowels*; his *bowels are troubled*, and *do sound*, when he is (for upholding justice, or reclaiming sinners) constrained to inflict punishment; of him it is said, that *his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*; and that he was *afflicted in all the afflictions* of his people. So incredible miracles doth infinite charity work in God, that the impassible God in a manner should suffer with us, that happiness itself should partake in our misery; that grief should spring up in the fountain of joy. How this can be, we thoroughly cannot well apprehend; but surely those expresses are used in condescension to signify the greatly charitable benignity of God, and to shew us our duty, that *we should be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful*, sympathizing with the miseries and sorrows of our brethren.

James v. 11. Luke i. 78. Jer. xxxi. 20. Isa. lxiii. 15. Jud. x. 16. (ὠλιγώθη. LXX.) Isa lxiii. 9. (Hos. xi. 8.) Luke vi. 36. Eph. v. 1. (Luke xvi. 20.)

This is that duty which is so frequently inculcated; when we are charged to *put on our bowels of pity*, to be εὔσπλαγχνοι, *tender-hearted*, to be συμπαθεῖς, *compassionate*, one toward another.

Col. iii. 12. Phil. ii. 1. Eph. iv. 32. 1 Pet. iii. 8.

Hence it is, that good men in this world cannot live in any briskness of mirth or height of jollity, their own enjoyments being tempered by the discontents of others; the continual obvious spectacles of sorrow and of sin damping their pleasures, and quashing excessive transports of joy: for who could much enjoy himself in an hospital, in a prison, in a charnel?

V. It is generally a property of love to appropriate its object; in apprehension and affection embracing it, pos-

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sessing it, enjoying it as its own: so charity doth make our neighbour to be ours, engaging us to tender his case, and his concerns as our own; so that we shall exercise about them the same affections of soul, (the same desires, the same hopes and fears, the same joys and sorrows,) as about our own nearest and most peculiar interest; so that his danger will affright us, and in his security we shall find repose; his profit is gain, and his losses are damages to us; we do rise by his preferment, and sink down by his fall; his good speed is a satisfaction, and his disappointment a cross to us; his enjoyments afford pleasure, and his sufferings bring pain to us.

So charity doth enlarge our minds beyond private considerations, conferring on them an universal interest, and reducing all the world within the verge of their affectionate care; so that a man's self is a very small and inconsiderable portion of his regard: whence charity is said not to *seek its own things*, and we are commanded not to *look on our own things*; for that the regard which charity beareth to its own interest, in comparison to that which it beareth toward the concerns of others, hath the same proportion as one man hath to all men; being therefore exceedingly small, and as it were none at all.

1 Cor. xiii. 5. x. 24. Phil. ii. 4.

This, saith St. Chrysostom, *is the canon of most perfect Christianism, this is an exact boundary, this is the highest top of it, to seek things profitable to the public*[a]: and *according to this rule* charity *doth walk*, it prescribeth that compass to itself, it aspireth to that pitch; it disposeth to act as St. Paul did, *I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

Phil. iv. 16. 1 Cor. x. 33.

VI. It is a property of love to affect union, or the greatest approximation that can be to its object. As hatred doth set things at distance, making them to shun or chase away one another; so love doth attract things,

a Τοῦτο κανὼν χριστιανισμοῦ τοῦ πλειστάτου, τοῦτο ὅρος ἠκριβωμένος, αὕτη ἡ κορυφὴ ἡ ἀνωτάτω, τὸ τὰ κοινῆ συμφέροντα ζητεῖν. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Orat.* xxv.

doth combine them, doth hold them fast together; every one would be embracing and enjoying what he loveth in the manner whereof it is capable: so doth charity dispose a man to conjunction with others; it soon will breed acquaintance, kind conversation, and amicable correspondence with our neighbour.

It would be a stranger to no man, to whom by its intercourse it may yield any benefit or comfort.

Its arms are always open, and its bosom free to receive all, who do not reject or decline its amity.

It is most frankly accessible, most affable, most tractable, most sociable, most apt to interchange good offices; most ready to oblige others, and willing to be obliged by them.

It avoideth that unreasonable suspiciousness and diffidence, that timorous shyness, that crafty reservedness, that supercilious morosity, that fastidious sullenness, and the like untoward dispositions, which keep men in estrangement, stifling good inclinations to familiarity and friendship.

VII. It is a property of love to desire a reciprocal affection; for that is the surest possession and firmest union, which is grounded upon voluntarily conspiring in affection; and if we do value any person, we cannot but prize his good-will and esteem.

Spes mutuæ charitatis *Sen. Ep.* ix.

Charity is the mother of friendship, not only as inclining us to love others, but as attracting others to love us; disposing us to affect their amity, and by obliging means to procure it.

Hence is that evangelical precept so often enjoined to us, of *pursuing peace with all men*, importing that we should desire and seek by all fair means the good-will of men, without which peace from them cannot subsist; for if they do not love us, they will be infesting us with unkind words or deeds.

Heb. xii. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Rom. xii. 18.

VIII. Hence also charity disposeth to please our neighbour, not only by inoffensive but by obliging demeanour; by a ready complaisance and compliance with his fashion,

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with his humour, with his desire in matters lawful, or in a way consistent with duty and discretion.

Rom. xv. 2. Such charity St. Paul did prescribe; *Let every one please his neighbour, for his good to edification;* such he practis-

1 Cor. x. 33. ix. 19. ed himself, *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit;* and, *I have made myself a servant to all, that I might gain the more.*

Rom. xv. 3. John ii. 2. Such was the charity of our Lord, for *even Christ pleased not himself:* he indeed did stoop to converse with sorry men in their way, he came when he was invited, he accepted their entertainment, he from the frankness of his conversation with all sorts of persons did undergo the reproach of

Matt. xi. 19. Luke vii. 34. being *a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*

It is the genius and complexion of charity to affect nothing uncouth or singular in matters of indifferent nature; to be candid, not rigid in opinion; to be pliable, not stiff in humour; to be smooth and gentle, not rugged and peevish in behaviour.

It doth indeed not flatter, not sooth, not humour any man in bad things, or in things very absurd and foolish; it would rather choose to displease and cross him, than to abuse, to delude, to wrong, or hurt him; but excepting such cases, it gladly pleaseth all men, denying its own will and conceit to satisfy the pleasure and fancy of others; practising that which St. Peter enjoined in that precept, *Be of one mind, be compassionate, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous* [b]; or as St. Paul might intend,

Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13. when he bid us, χαρίζεσθαι ἀλλήλοις, *to gratify, to indulge one another.*

IX. Love of our neighbour doth imply readiness upon all occasions to do him good, to promote and advance his benefit in all kinds.

It doth not rest in good opinions of mind, and good affections of heart, but from those roots doth put forth

[b] Ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὔσπλαγχνοι, φιλόφρονες. 1 Pet. iii. 8.

abundant fruits of real beneficence; it will not be satisfied with faint desires or sluggish wishes, but will be up and doing what it can for its neighbour.

Love is a busy and active, a vigorous and sprightful, a courageous and industrious disposition of soul; which will prompt a man, and push him forward to undertake or undergo any thing, to endure pains, to encounter dangers, to surmount difficulties for the good of its object.

Love is strong as death. Cant. viii. 6.

Such is true charity; it will dispose us *to love*, as St. John prescribeth, ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, *in work and in truth*: not only in mental desire, but in effectual performance; not only in verbal pretence, but in real effect.

1 John iii. 8. James ii. 16.

Hence charity will render a man a general benefactor, in all matters, upon all occasions; affording to his neighbour all kinds of assistance and relief, according to his neighbour's need, and his own ability; it will make him a bountiful dispenser of his goods to the poor, a comforter of the afflicted, a visiter of the sick, an instructor of the ignorant, an adviser of the doubtful, a protector of the oppressed, a hospitable entertainer of strangers, a reconciler of differences, an intercessor for offenders, an advocate of those who need defence, a succourer of all that want help.

Ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων Acts xx. 35. Ἀντέχεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενῶν. 1 Thess. v. 14. Παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους. 1 Thess. v. 14. Job xxix. 17. xxxi. 32.

The practice of Job describeth its nature; *I*, saith he, *delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. If I have held the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering. The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller.*

Job. xxix. 12. Job xxxi. 16. Job xxxi. 32.

Such is a charitable man; the sun is not more liberal

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of his light and warmth, than he is of beneficial influence.

He doth not spare his substance, being *rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate:* and where his estate faileth, yet the contribution of his endeavour will not be wanting; he will be ready to draw and press others to beneficence; so doing good not only according to his power, but in a manner beyond it, making the ability of others to supply his own weakness, and being liberal with their wealth. The description of Cimon is a good character of a charitable man, *Nulli fides ejus, nulli operi, nulli res familiaris defuit.*

Corn. Nep. in Cimone.

Thus may the poorest men be great benefactors: so the poor Apostles, who *had nothing*, yet *did enrich many;* not only in spiritual treasure, but taking care for supply of the poor, by their precepts and moving exhortations: and he that *had not where to lay his head*, was the most bountiful person that ever was; *for our sake he became poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich.*

(1 Cor. iv. 11.) 2 Cor. vi. 10. ὡς πτωχοὶ, πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες. 2 Cor. viii. 9.

In all kinds charity disposeth to further our neighbour's good, but especially in the concerns of his soul; the which as incomparably they do surpass all others, so it is the truest and noblest charity to promote them.

It will incline us *to draw forth our soul to the hungry, and to satisfy the afflicted soul; to bring the poor that are cast out to our house; to cover the naked, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke;* to supply any corporal indigency, to relieve any temporal distress: but especially it will induce to make provision for the soul, to relieve the spiritual needs of our neighbour; by affording him good instruction, and taking care that he be informed in his duty, or conducted in his way to happiness; by admonition and exhortation, quickening, encouraging, *provoking*, spurring him *to good works;* by resolving him in his doubts, and comforting him in his troubles of conscience; (*lifting up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees;*) by seasonable and prudent reproof: by all ways *serving to*

Isa. lviii. 7. —10. Ezek. xviii. 16.

Εἰς παροξυσμὸν καλῶν ἔργων. Heb. x. 24. Ἀνορθώσατε. Heb. xii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 14.

convert him from the error of his way; and so *saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins;* which is the proper work of charity; for *charity*, saith St. Peter, *covereth a multitude of sins.* SERM. XXVII. Jam. v. 20. 1 Pet. iv. 8. Prov. x 12.

This was the charity of our Saviour: *He went about doing good*, healing the bodily infirmities, *(every sickness and every disease among the people,)* satisfying their bodily necessities, comforting them in their worldly distresses, so far as to perform great miracles for those purposes; (curing inveterate maladies, restoring limbs and senses, raising the dead, multiplying loaves and fishes:) but his charity was chiefly exercised in spiritual beneficence; in purveying sustenance and comfort for their souls, in feeding their minds by wholesome instruction, in curing their spiritual distempers, in correcting their ignorances and errors, in exciting them to duty by powerful advices and exhortations, in supporting them by heavenly consolations against temptations and troubles. Acts x. 38. Matt. iv. 23. ix. 35. John xiv. 1. xv 11. xvi. 33. Matt. v. 10.

Thus also did the charity of the holy Apostles principally exert itself: they did not neglect affording relief to the outward needs of men; they did take care by earnest intercession and exhortation for support of the poor; but especially they did labour to promote the spiritual benefit of men: for this they did undertake so many cares, and toils, and travels; for this they did undergo so many hardships, so many hazards, so many difficulties and troubles; [a] *Therefore*, said St. Paul, *I endure all things for the elects' sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.* Acts iii. 6. v. 15, 16. viii. 7. xxviii. 8, 9. xx. 35. Rom. xv. 26. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. Gal. ii. 10. 2 Cor. viii. 7. 2 Cor. ix. 1. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Heb. xiii. 16. 1 Tim. 2. ii. 10.

X. This indeed is a property of charity, to make a man deny himself, to neglect his own interest, yea, to despise all selfish regards for the benefit of his neighbour: to him that is inspired with charity, his own good is not good, when it standeth in competition with the more considerable good of another; nothing is so dear to him, which he gladly will not part with upon such considerations.

Liberty is a precious thing, which every man gladly would enjoy: yet how little did St. Paul's charity regard

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it? how absolutely did he abandon it for his neighbour's good? *Though*, said he, *I am free from all men, yet I have made myself servant* (or have enslaved myself) *unto all, that I might gain the more:* and he did express much satisfaction in the bonds which he bare for the good of his brethren. *I Paul*, saith he, *the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you gentiles;—I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds;—endure all things for the elects' sake.*

Πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα. 1 Cor. ix. 19. Phil. i. 12. Eph. iii. 1—13. 2 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

Every man loveth his own humour, and would please himself: but the charity of St. Paul did rather choose *to please all men; making him all things to all men, that by all means he might save some:* and the rule he commended to others, and imposed on himself, was this, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

1 Cor. ix. 33. 1 Cor. x. 22. Rom. xv. 1.

Profit is the common mark of men's designs and endeavours; but charity often doth not aim thereat, but waveth it for its neighbour's advantage: for μὴ σκοπεῖτε, *Aim not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others*, is St. Paul's rule; and, *Not to seek his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved*, was his practice.

Phil. ii. 4. 1 Cor. x. 24.

To suffer is grievous to human nature, and every man would shun it; but charity not only doth support it, but joyeth in it, when it conduceth to its neighbour's advantage; *I rejoice*, said that charitable Apostle, *in my sufferings for you.*

Col. i. 24. 2 Cor. i. 4, 6. vii. 4.

Ease is a thing generally desirable and acceptable; but charity doth part with it, embracing labour, watchings, travels, and troubles for its neighbour's good: upon this account did the holy Apostles undertake *abundant labours*, as St. Paul telleth us; and *to this end*, saith he, *do I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily:* to what end? *that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:* this is that κόπος ἀγάπης, that *labour of love*, which they did commend in others, and so notably themselves exercise.

1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8. 2 Cor. xi. 23. vi. 5. Εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος. Col. i. 29. Acts xxi. 31, 35.

Life of all things is held most precious and dear; yet *this* charity upon urgent occasions will expose, will sa-

Heb. vi. 7. 1 Thess. i. 3.

crifice for its neighbour's good: *This*, our Lord telleth us, *is the greatest love that any man can express to his friend*; and the highest instance that ever was of charity was herein shewed; the imitation whereof St. John doth not doubt to recommend to us: *In this*, saith he, *have we known the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren*: and St. Paul, *Walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God*: the which precept he backed with his own example; *I*, saith he, *very gladly will spend and be spent for your souls*; and, *If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all*; and, *Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.* SERM. XXVII. John xv. 13. 1 John iii. 16. John xv. 12. Eph. v. 2. 2 Cor. xii. 15. Phil. ii. 17. 1 Thess. ii. 8.

Reputation to some is more dear than life, and it is worse than death to be held a malefactor, to be loaded with odious reproaches, to have an infamous character; yet charity will engage men hereto, willingly to sustain the most grievous obloquy and disgrace: for this the same heroical Apostles did pass through *honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true*:—for this they *were made a spectacle to the world, as fools, as weak, as despicable*;—were *reviled, defamed, made as the filth of the world, and offscouring of all things*. For this St. Paul was content to *suffer*, ὡς κακοῦργος, *as a malefactor*. So there was nothing which charity will not deny itself and lose for the good of its neighbour. 2 Cor. vi. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 9, 10, 13. 2 Tim. ii. 9.

XI. It is a property of love not to stand upon distinctions and nice respects; but to be condescensive, and willing to perform the meanest offices, needful or useful for the good of its friend.

He that truly loveth is a voluntary servant, and gladly will stoop to any employment, for which the need or considerable benefit of him whom he loveth doth call.

So the greatest souls, and the most glorious beings, the

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which are most endued with charity, by it are disposed with greatest readiness to serve their inferiors.

1 Cor. ix. 19.

This made St. Paul constitute himself *a servant* (we might render it a slave) *of all men*, absolutely devoted to the promoting their interests with his utmost labour and diligence; undertaking toilsome drudgeries, running about upon errands for them.

Psal. xci. 11. xxxiv 7.

This maketh the blessed and glorious angels (the principalities and powers above) vouchsafe to wait on men, to be the guards of all good men, to be ministering spirits,

Heb. i. 7, 14.

sent out to minister for them who shall inherit salvation: not only obedience to God enforceth them, but charity disposeth them gladly to serve us, who are so much their in-

Luke xv. 7, 10. ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων.

feriors; the same charity, which produceth joy in them at the conversion of a sinner.

John xvii. 5. 2 Cor viii. 9. Luke xxii. 27. Matt. xx. 28.

This made the Son of God to descend from heaven, and lay aside that *glory which he had with God before the world was;* this made him who was so *rich to become poor, that we by his poverty might be enriched;* this made him *converse* and demean himself among his servants, *as he that ministered;* this made him to wash his disciples' feet, thereby designing instructively to exemplify the duty and nature

John xiii. 14.

of charity; for *If*, said he, *I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, then ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

Isa. lvii. 15.

This maketh God himself (*the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity*) to condescend so far, as to be continually employed in carefully watching over, in providing

Ps. cxiii. 6. (Ps. viii. 4. cxliv. 3 Job vii. 17.)

for, in protecting and assisting us vile and wretched *worms;* for though *he dwelleth on high, yet humbleth he himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth.* This maketh him with so much pain and patience to support our infirmities, to bear with our offences, to wait for our conver-

Isa. xliii. 24.

sion; according to that protestation in the Prophet, *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.*

In conformity to this wonderful practice, whose actions

are the best rules and patterns of our deportment, charity should dispose us, according to St. Paul's practice, *by love to serve one another.* SERM. XXVII. Gal. v. 13.

Indeed it will not suffer any man to look down on another with supercilious contempt or neglect, as if he were unworthy or beneath our regard. It will incline superiors to look on their inferiors, (their subjects, their servants, their meanest and poorest neighbours,) not as beasts or as slaves, but as men, as brethren; as descending from the same stock, as partakers of the common nature and reason; as those *who have obtained the like precious faith;* as heirs of the same precious promises and glorious hopes; as their equals in the best things, and in all considerable advantages; equals in God's sight, and according to our Lord's intent, when he said, *One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;* according to St. Paul's exhortation to Philemon, that ye would receive Onesimus, *not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved in the Lord.* Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15. 2 Pet. i. 1. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1. Matt. xxiii. 9. Philem. 16.

Accordingly charity will dispose men of rank in their behaviour to be condescensive, lowly, meek, courteous, obliging, and helpful to those, who in human eye or in worldly state are most below them; remembering that ordinance of our Lord, charged on all his disciples, and enforced by his own pattern, *He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant.* Matt. xxiii. 11. Luke xxii. 27.

Love indeed is the great leveller, which in a manner setteth all things on even ground, and reduceth to a just poise; which bringeth down heaven to earth, and raiseth up earth to heaven; which inclineth the highest to wait upon the lowest; which engageth the strength of the mightiest to help the weakest, and the wealth of the richest to supply the poorest, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, that *there may be an equality;* that no where there may be an useless abundance, or a helpless indigence. Amicitia pares invenit, aut facit. 2 Cor. viii. 14.

XII. Charity doth regulate our dealing, our deportment, our conversation toward our neighbour, implying good usage and fair treatment of him on all occasions; for

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no man doth handle that which he loveth rudely or roughly, so as to endanger the loss, the detriment, the hurt, or fence thereof.

Wherefore the language of charity is soft and sweet, not wounding the heart, nor grating on the ear of any with whom a man converseth; like the language of which the Wise Man saith, *The words of the pure are pleasant words;*—such as are *sweet to the soul, and health to the bones:* and, *the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious;* such as our Lord's were, λόγοι χάριτος, *words of grace;* such as the Apostle speaketh of, *Let your speech be always* ἐν χάριτι, *with grace*—such as may *give grace to the hearers;* being entertained, not with aversation, but with favourable acceptance.

Prov. xv. 26. Prov. xvi. 24. Eccles. x. 12. Luke iv. 22. Col. iv. 6. ἵνα δῷ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούσι. Eph. iv. 29

Its carriage is gentle, courteous, benign; bearing in it marks of affection and kind respect.

Its dealing is equal, moderate, fair, yielding no occasion of disgust or complaint; not catching or taking advantages, not meting hard measure.

It doth not foster any bad passion or humour, which may embitter or sour conversation, so that it rendereth a man continually good company.

If a man be harsh or surly in his discourse, rugged or rude in his demeanour, hard and rigorous in his dealing, it is a certain argument of his defect in charity: for that calmeth and sweeteneth the mind; it quasheth keen, fierce, and boisterous passions; it discardeth those conceits, and those humours, from whence such practice doth issue.

1 Cor. xiii. 5. *Charity*, saith St. Paul, οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, *behaveth not itself unhandsomely;* is not untoward, unseemly, uncivil, or clownish in word, or in carriage, or in deed: it is in truth the most civilizing and most polishing disposition that can be; nothing doth render a man so completely genteel; not in an affected or artificial way, (consisting in certain postures or motions of body; (dopping, cringing, &c.) in forms of expression, or modish addresses, which men learn like parrots, and vent by rote, usually not meaning any

thing by them, often with them disguising fraud and rancour,) but in a real and natural manner, suggested by good judgment and hearty affection. SERM. XXVII.

A charitable man may perhaps not be guilty of courtship, or may be unpractised in the modes of address; but he will not be deficient in the substance of paying every man proper and due respect: this indeed is true courtesy, grounded on reason, and proceeding from the heart; which therefore is far more genuine, more solid, more steady, than that which is built on fashion and issueth from affectation; the which indeed only doth ape or counterfeit the deportment of charity: for what a charitable man truly is, that a gallant would seem to be.

Such are the properties of charity.

There be also farther many particular acts, which have a very close alliance to it, (being ever coherent with it, or springing from it,) which are recommended to us by precepts in the holy Scripture; the which it will be convenient to mention.

1. It is a proper act of charity to forbear anger upon provocation, or to repress its motions; to resent injuries and discourtesies either not at all, or very calm and mildly: for

Charity ἀ παροξύνεται, *is not easily provoked.* 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

Charity μακροθυμεῖ, *suffereth long and is kind.* Verse 4.

Charity πάντα ὑπομένει, *doth endure all things.* Verse 7.

Anger is a violent insurrection of the mind against a person, but love is not apt to rise up in opposition against any; anger is an intemperate heat, love hath a pure warmth quite of another nature; as natural heat is from a fever; or as the heat of the sun from that of a culinary fire, which putteth that out, as the sun-beams do extinguish a culinary fire: anger hath an ὄρεξις ἀμύνης, *an appetite of revenge*, or doing mischief to the object of it; but love is innocent *and worketh no evil.*

Love disposeth, if our neighbour doth misbehave himself toward us, (by wrongful usage, or unkind carriage,) to be sorry for him, and to pity him; which are passions contrary to anger, and slaking the violences of it. Rom. xiii. 10.

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It is said in the Canticles, *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it:* charity would hold out against many neglects, many provocations.

Cant. viii. 7.

Ἀνέχεσθαι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

Hence the precepts: *Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: Put off anger, wrath, malice,* &c. [a]*Be slow to wrath.*

Eph. iv. 1. 2. Eph. iv. 31. 1 Thess. v. 14. μακροθυμεῖτε. Col. iii. 8. [a] Jam. i. 19.

2. It is a proper act of charity to remit offences, suppressing all designs of revenge, and not retaining any grudge: for,

Charity πάντα στέγει, doth cover all things; and in this sense doth *hide a multitude of sins:* all dispositions, all intents to do harm are inconsistent with it, are quite repugnant to it.

1 Cor. xiii. 7. Prov. x. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 8. Jam. v. 20.

Hence those precepts: *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you: See that none render evil for evil, but ever follow that which is good both among yourselves and to all men:* and many the like precepts occur in the Gospels, the apostolical writings; yea even in the Old Testament, wherein charity did not run in so high a strain.

Col. iii. 12, 13. μομφήν. Eph. iv. 32. 1 Thess. v. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9. Rom. xii. 17. Matt. vi. 14. v. 44. Prov. xx. 22. xxv. 21.

3. It is a duty coherent with charity, to maintain concord and peace; to abstain from contention and strife, together with the sources of them, pride, envy, emulation, malice.

We are commanded to be σύμψυχοι, and ὁμόφρονες, *of one soul, of one mind,* (like *the multitude of believers* in the Acts, who *had one heart and one soul;*) that we should *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;* that we should be *of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind;* that we should *all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the*

Phil. ii. 2. 1 Pet. iii. 8. Acts iv. 32. Eph. iv. 3. Phil. ii. 2. i. 27. 1 Cor. i. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Rom. xv. 5, 6. xii. 16. Phil. iii. 16.

same judgment; that there be no factions, or *schisms in the body*; that all dissensions, all clamours, all murmurings, all emulations, should be abandoned and put away from us; that we should *pursue and maintain peace with all men*: obedience to which commands can only be the result of charity, esteeming the person and judgment of our neighbour; desiring his good will, tendering his good; curbing those fleshly lusts, and those fierce passions, from the predominancy whereof discords and strifes do spring.

1 Cor. xii. 25. xi. 18. i. 11. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Phil. ii. 14. Heb. xii. 14. Rom. xii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Jam. iv. 1. 1 Cor. iii. 3. Gal. v. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 4.

4. Another charitable practice is, being candid in opinion, and mild in censure, about our neighbour and his actions; having a good conceit of his person, and representing him to ourselves under the best character we can; making the most favourable construction of his words, and the fairest interpretation of his designs.

Charity disposeth us to entertain a good opinion of our neighbour; for desiring his good we shall be concerned for him, and prejudiced, as it were, on his side; being unwilling to discover any blemish in him to our own disappointment and regret.

Love cannot subsist without esteem; and it would not willingly by destroying that lose its own subsistence.

Love would preserve any good of its friend, and therefore his reputation; which is a good in itself precious, and ever very dear to him.

Love would bestow any good, and therefore its esteem; which is a considerable good.

Harsh censure is a very rude kind of treatment, grievously vexing a man, and really hurting him; charity therefore will not be guilty of it.

It disposeth rather to oversee and connive at faults, than to find them, or to pore on them; rather to hide and smother, than to disclose or divulge them; rather to extenuate and excuse, than to exaggerate or aggravate them.

Are words capable of a good sense? charity will expound them thereto: may an action be imputed to any good intent? charity will ever refer it thither: doth a

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fault admit any plea, apology, or diminution? charity will be sure to allege it: may a quality admit a good name? charity will call it thereby.

1 Cor. xiii. 5. It doth not λογίζεσθαι κακὸν, *impute evil*, or put it to any man's account, beyond absolute necessity.

1 Cor. xiii. 7. It *hopeth all things*, and *believeth all things;* hopeth and believeth all things for the best, in favour to its neighbour, concerning his intentions and actions liable to doubt.

1 Tim. vi. 4. It banisheth *all evil surmises;* it rejecteth all ill stories, malicious insinuations, perverse glosses and descants.

5. Another charitable practice is, to comport with the infirmities of our neighbour; according to that rule of St. Paul, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;* and that precept, *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

Ἀντέχεσθαι ἀσθενῶν. Acts xx. 35. 1 Thess. v. 14. Rom. xv. 1. Gal. vi. 2.

Is a man wiser than his neighbour, or in any case freer of defects? charity will dispose to use that advantage so as not to contemn him, or insult over him; but to instruct him, to help him, to comfort him.

As we deal with children, allowing to the infirmities of their age, bearing their ignorance, frowardness, untoward humours, without distasting them; so should we with our brethren who labour under any weakness of mind or humour.

[a] Μολύνεται. 1 Cor. x. 7. Τύπτοντες τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενῆσαν. 1 Cor. viii. 12. Rom. xiv. 15. Οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖς. 1 Cor. x. 32. viii. 13. Rom. xiv. 21.

6. It is an act of charity to abstain from offending, or scandalizing our brethren; by doing any thing, which either may occasion him to commit sin, or disaffect him to religion, or discourage him in the practice of duty, (that which St. Paul calleth to [a]*defile* and *smite his weak conscience,*) or which anywise may discompose, vex, and *grieve* him: for, *If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably.*

SERMON XXVIII.

MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS TO CHARITY.

HEB. x. 24.

Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

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THAT which is here recommended by the Apostle, as the common duty of Christians toward each other, upon emergent occasions, with zeal and care to provoke one another to the practice of charity and beneficence, may well be conceived the special duty of those, whose office it is to instruct and guide others, when opportunity is afforded: with that obligation I shall now comply, by representing divers considerations serving to excite and encourage us to that practice: this, (without premising any description or explication of the duty; the nature, special acts, and properties whereof I have already declared) I shall immediately undertake.

I. First then, I desire you to remember and consider that you are men, and as such obliged to this duty, as being very agreeable to human nature; the which, not being corrupted or distempered by ill use, doth incline to it, doth call for it, doth like and approve it, doth find satisfaction and delight therein.

St. Paul chargeth us to be εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, or *to have a natural affection one toward another:* that supposeth a στοργή, inbred to men, which should be roused up, Rom. xii. 10.

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improved and exercised. Such an one indeed there is, which although often raked up and smothered in the common attendances on the providing for our needs, and prosecuting our affairs, will upon occasion more or less break forth and discover itself.

That the constitution and frame of our nature disposeth to it, we cannot but feel, when our bowels are touched with a sensible pain at the view of any calamitous object; when our fancies are disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling a man; when the sight of a tragedy wringeth compassion and tears from us: which affections we can hardly quash by any reflection, that such events, true or feigned, do not concern ourselves.

Hence doth nature so strongly affect society, and abhor solitude; so that a man cannot enjoy himself alone, or find satisfaction in any good without a companion[a]: not only for that he then cannot receive, but also because he cannot impart assistance, consolation, and delight in converse: for men do not affect society only that they may obtain benefits thereby; but as much or more, that they may be enabled to communicate them; nothing being more distasteful than to be always on the taking hand: neither indeed hath any thing a more pleasant and savoury relish to do good; as even Epicurus, the great patron of pleasure, did confess.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency, do at first sight, without aid of any discursive reflection, obtain approbation and applause from men; being acceptable and amiable to their mind, as beauty to their sight, harmony to their hearing, fragrancy to their smell, and sweetness to their taste: and, correspondently, uncharitable dispositions and practices (malignity, harshness, cru-

[a] Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἕλοιτ' ἂν καθ' αὑτὸν τὰ πάντ' ἔχειν ἀγαθά. *Arist. Eth.* ix. 9.

Hominem homini natura conciliat. *Sen. Ep.* ix.

Nullius boni sine socio jucunda possessio est. *Sen. Ep.* vi.

Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς βουλόμενος συνδῆσαι πάντας ἀλλήλοις, τοιαύτην τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐπέθηκεν ἀνάγκην, ὡς ἐν τῷ τῶν πλησίον συμφέροντι τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου δεδέσθαι· καὶ ὁ κόσμος ἅπας οὕτω συνέστηκε. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Or.* xxv.

elty) do offend the mind with a disgustful resentment of them. SERM. XXVIII.

We may appeal to the conscience of each man, if he doth not feel dissatisfaction in that fierceness or frowardness of temper, which produceth uncharitableness; if he have not a complacence in that sweet and calm disposition of soul, whence charity doth issue; if he do not condemn himself for the one, and approve himself in the other practice.

This is the common judgment of men; and therefore in common language this practice is styled humanity, as best sorting with our nature, and becoming it; and the principle whence it springeth is called good-nature: and the contrary practice is styled inhumanity, as thwarting our natural inclinations, or divesting us of manhood; and its source likewise is termed ill-nature, or a corruption of our nature.

Εἰς γὰρ φιλανθρωπίας ἔργα ὑπὸ Θεοῦ κατεσκευάσμεθα. *Flavian. CP. Ep. in Syn. Chalc. Act.* i. p. 111.

It is therefore a monstrous paradox, crossing the common sense of men, which in this loose and vain world hath lately got such vogue, that all men naturally are enemies one to another: it pretendeth to be grounded on common observation and experience; but it is only an observing the worst actions of the worst men; of dissolute ruffians, of villanous cheats, of ravenous oppressors, of malicious politicians, of such degenerate apostates from humanity; by whose practice (debauched by vain conceits and naughty customs) an ill measure is taken of mankind. Aristotle himself, who had observed things as well as any of these men, and with as sharp a judgment, affirmeth the contrary, that all men are friends, and disposed to entertain friendly correspondence with one another [b]: indeed to say the contrary is a blasphemy against the Author of our nature; and is spoken no less out of profane enmity

[b] Οἰκεῖον τῶς ἀνθρώπος ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ φίλον. *Arist. Eth.* viii. 1. *Rhet.* i. 11.

Ἐνέθηκε γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς φίλτρον τῇ φύσει τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ, ὥστε ἀλλήλως ἀγαπᾶν. *Chrys. in Eph. Orat.* ii.

Συνδεσμῶν εἰς ὁμογνωμοσύνην ὁ ἀριστοτέχνης Θεὸς ἦν ἐδημιούργησε φύσιν τῇ διαθέσει τὸς λόγῳ διοικουμένως συνισφιγξε, &c. *Proclus Constantinop. Syn. Chalc. Act.* xiv.

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against him, than out of venomous malignity against men: out of hatred to God and goodness they would disparage and vilify the noblest work of God's creation; yet do they, if we sound the bottom of their mind, imply themselves to admire this quality, and by their decrying it do commend it: for it is easy to discern that therefore only they slander mankind as uncapable of goodness, because out of malignity they would not allow it so excellent a quality.

II. Let us consider what our neighbour is; how near in blood, how like in nature, how much in all considerable respects the same with us he is.

Should any one wrong or defame our brother, we should be displeased; should we do it ourselves, or should we omit any office of kindness toward him, we should blame ourselves: every man is such, of one stock, of one blood with us; and as such may challenge and call for real affection from us.

Should any one mar, tear, or deface our picture, or shew any kind of disrespect thereto, we should be offended, taking it for an indignity put on ourselves; and as for ourselves, we should never in such a manner affront or despite ourselves: every man is such, our most lively image, representing us most exactly in all the main figures and features of body, of soul, of state; we thence do owe respect to every one.

Δι' ὁμοιότητος πάντα φιλεῖ πρὸς ἄλληλα συνάπτεσθαι. *Plato Symp.*

Every man is another self, partaker of the same nature, endued with the same faculties, subject to the same laws, liable to the same fortunes; distinguished from us only in accidental and variable circumstances: whence if we be amiable or estimable, so is he upon the same grounds; and acting impartially (according to right judgment) we should yield love and esteem to him: by slighting, hating, injuring, hurting him we do consequentially abuse ourselves, or acknowledge ourselves deservedly liable to the same usage.

Every man, as a Christian, is in a higher and nobler way allied, assimilated, and identified to us; to him therefore upon the like grounds improved charity is more due;

and we wrong our heavenly relations, our better nature, our more considerable selves, in withholding it from him. SERM. XXVIII.

III. Equity doth plainly require charity from us: for every one is ready not only to wish and seek, but to demand and claim love from others; so as to be much offended, and grievously to complain, if he do not find it.

We do all conceive love and respect due to us from all men: we take all men bound to wish and tender our welfare; we suppose our need to require commiseration and succour from every man: if it be refused, we think it a hard case, and that we are ill used: we cry out of wrong, of discourtesy, of inhumanity, of baseness, practised toward us.

A moderate respect and affection will hardly satisfy us; we pretend to them in the highest degree, disgusting the least appearance of disregard or disaffection; we can scarce better digest indifference than hatred.

This evidenceth our opinion and conscience to be, that we ought to pay the greatest respect and kindness to our neighbour: for it is plainly unjust and ridiculously vain, to require that from others, which we refuse to others, who may demand it upon the same title; nor can we without self-condemnation practise that which we detest in others.

In all reason and equity, if I would have another my friend, I must be a friend to him; if I pretend to charity from all men, I must render it to all in the same kind and measure.

Hence is the law of charity well expressed in those terms, *of doing to others whatever we would have them do to us*; whereby the palpable equity of this practice is demonstrated. Matt. vii.

IV. Let us consider that charity is a right noble and worthy thing: greatly perfective of our nature; much dignifying and beautifying our soul.

It rendereth a man truly great, enlarging his mind unto a vast circumference, and to a capacity near infinite; so that it by a general care doth reach all things,

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by an universal affection doth embrace and grasp the world.

By it our reason obtaineth a field or scope of employment worthy of it, not confined to the slender interests of one person or one place, but extending to the concerns of all men.

Chrys. in Eph. Or. 9.

Charity is the imitation and copy of that immense love, which is the fountain of all being and all good; which made all things, which preserveth the world, which sustaineth every creature: nothing advance thus so near to a resemblance of him, who is essential love and goodness; who freely and purely, without any regard to his own advantage or capacity of finding any beneficial return, doth bear and express the highest good-will, with a liberal hand pouring down showers of bounty and mercy on all his creatures; who daily putteth up numberless indignities and injuries, upholding and maintaining those who offend and provoke him [c].

Charity rendereth us as angels, or peers to those glorious and blessed creatures, who, without receiving or expecting any requital from us, do heartily desire and delight in our good, are ready to promote it, do willingly serve and labour for it. Nothing is more amiable, more admirable, more venerable, even in the common eye and opinion of men; it hath in it a beauty and a majesty apt to ravish every heart; even a spark of it in generosity of dealing breedeth admiration, a glimpse of it in formal courtesy of behaviour procureth much esteem, being deemed to accomplish and adorn a man: how lovely therefore and truly gallant is an entire, sincere, constant and uniform practice thereof, issuing from pure good-will and affection!

Love indeed or goodness (for true love is nothing else but goodness exerting itself, in direction toward objects

[c] Ἡμᾶς εἴτις ἐρωτήσειε, τί τὸ τιμώμενον ὑμῖν καὶ προσκυνούμενον, πρόχειρον εἰπεῖν ἡ ἀγάπη· ὁ γαρ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ἡ ἀγάπη ἐστι, ῥῆσις τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, καὶ τοῦτο χαίρει μᾶλλον ἀκούων ὁ Θεὸς, ἢ τι ἄλλο. *Naz. Or.* 14.

Καθ' ἑκάστην ὑβρίζεται τὴν ἡμέραν, παρ' ὧν καὶ ὁρῶν, καὶ ἀκούων, καὶ οὐτι σκηπτὸν ἀφῆκε, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. γ'.

capable of its influence,) is the only amiable and only honourable thing: power and wit may be admired by some, or have some fond idolaters; but being severed from goodness, or abstracted from their subserviency to it, they cannot obtain real love, they deserve not any esteem: for the worst, the most unhappy, the most odious and contemptible of beings do partake of them in a high measure; the prince of darkness hath more power, and reigneth with absolute sovereignty over more subjects by many than the Great Turk; one devil may have more wit than all the politic Achitophels, and all the profane Hectors in the world; yet with all his power and all his wit he is most wretched, most detestable, and most despicable: and such in proportion is every one, who partaketh in his accursed dispositions of malice and uncharitableness. For, SERM. XXVIII.

On the other side uncharitableness is a very mean and base thing: it contracteth a man's soul into a narrow compass, or straiteneth it as it were into one point; drawing all his thoughts, his desires, his affections into himself, as to their centre; so that his reason, his will, his activity, have but one pitiful object to exercise themselves about: to scrape together a little pelf, to catch a vapour of fame, to prog for a frivolous semblance of power or dignity, to sooth the humour or pamper the sensuality of one poor worm, is the ignoble subject of his busy care and endeavour. Sen. de Tranq. iii.

By it we debase ourselves into an affinity with the meanest things, becoming either like beasts or fiends; like beasts, affecting only our own present sensible good; or like fiends, designing mischief and trouble to others.

It is indeed hard for a man without charity, not to be worse than an innocent beast; not at least to be as a fox, or a wolf; either cunningly lurching, or violently ravening for prey: love only can restrain a man from flying at all, and seizing on whatever he meeteth; from biting, from worrying, from devouring every one that is weaker than himself, or who cannot defend himself from his paws and teeth. Ezek. xxii. 27.

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V. The practice of charity is productive of many great benefits and advantages to us: so that to love our neighbour doth involve the truest love to ourselves; and we are not only obliged in duty, but may be encouraged by our interest thereto; beatitude is often pronounced to it, or to some particular instances of it; and well may it be so, for it indeed will constitute a man happy, producing to him manifold comforts and conveniences of life: some whereof we shall touch.

VI. (1.) Charity doth free our souls of all those bad dispositions and passions which vex and disquiet them: from those gloomy passions, which cloud our mind; from those keen passions, which fret our heart; from those tumultuous passions, which ruffle us, and discompose the frame of our soul[d].

It stifleth anger, (that swoon of reason, transporting a man out of himself;) for a man hardly can be incensed against those whom he tenderly loveth: a petty neglect, a hard word, a small discourtesy will not fire a charitable soul; the greatest affront or wrong can hardly kindle rage therein.

It banisheth envy, (that severely just vice, which never faileth to punish itself:) for no man will repine at his wealth or prosperity, no man will malign his worth or virtue, whose good he charitably desireth and wisheth[e].

It excludeth rancour and spite, those dispositions which create a hell in our soul; which are directly repugnant to charity, and thereby dispelled as darkness by light, cold by heat.

It suffereth not revenge (that canker of the heart) to harbour in our breast; for who can intend mischief to him, in whose good he delighteth, in whose evil he feeleth displeasure?

[d] Ὁ γὰρ τοιοῦτος καὶ φθόνῳ καὶ ὀργῇ καὶ βασκανίας καὶ ἀπονοίας καὶ κενοδοξίας, καὶ πονηρᾶς ἐπιθυμίας, καὶ παντὸς ἥττονος ἀτόπου, καὶ παντὸς νοσήματος καθαρεύουσαν τηρήσει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Orat.* xxxii.

[e] Φθόνου, ἡ δαπάνη τῶν ἐχόντων, ὁ τῶν πασχόντων ἰὸς, τὸ μόνον τῶν παθῶν ἀδικώτατόν τε ἅμα καὶ δικαιότατον, τὸ μὲν ὅτι πᾶσι διοχλεῖ τοῖς καλοῖς, τὸ δὲ ὅτι τήκει τοὺς ἔχοντας. *Gr. Naz. Or.* xxvii.

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It voideth fear, suspicion, jealousy of mischief designed against us: the which passions *have torment*, or do punish us, as St. John saith, racking us with anxious expectation of evil; wherefore *there is*, saith he, *no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear*: no man indeed is apt to fear him whom he loveth, or is able much to love him whom he feareth: for love esteemeth its object as innocent, fear apprehendeth it as hurtful; love disposeth to follow and embrace, fear inclineth to decline and shun. To suspect a friend therefore is to disavow him for such; and upon slender grounds to conceit ill of him, is to deem him unworthy of our love. The innocence and inoffensiveness of charity, which provoketh no man to do us harm, doth also breed great security and confidence: any man will think he may walk unarmed and unguarded among those to whom he beareth good-will, to whom he neither meaneth nor doeth any harm; being guarded by a good conscience, and shielded with innocence.

1 John iv. 18. κόλασιν ἔχει. Oderunt quem metuunt.

It removeth discontent or dissatisfaction in our state; the which usually doth spring from ill conceits and surmises about our neighbour, or from wrathful and spiteful affections toward him: for while men have good respect and kindness for their neighbours, they seldom are dissatisfied in their own condition; they can never want comfort, or despair of succour.

It curbeth ambition and avarice; those impetuous, those insatiable, those troublesome dispositions: for a man will not affect to climb above those, in whose honour he findeth satisfaction; nor to scramble with them for the goods, which he gladly would have them to enjoy: a competency will satisfy him, who taketh himself but for one among the rest, and who can as little endure to see others want as himself: who would trouble himself to get power over those, to overtop them in dignity and fame, to surpass them in wealth, whom he is ready to serve in the meanest offices of kindness, whom he would in honour prefer to himself, unto whom he will liberally communicate what he hath for his comfort and relief?

Κατὰ γὰρ τῦ ἀγαπωμένου ὐκ ἄν τις ἐπαρθείη ποτέ. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Or.* xxxii.

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In the prevalence of such bad passions and dispositions of soul our misery doth most consist; thence the chief troubles and inconveniences of our life do proceed: wherefore charity doth highly deserve of us in freeing us from them.

VII. (2.) It consequently doth settle our mind in a serene, calm, sweet, and cheerful state; in an even temper, and good humour, and harmonious order of soul; which ever will result from the evacuation of bad passions, from the composure of such as are indifferent, from the excitement of those which are good and pleasant: *The fruits of the Spirit*, saith St. Paul, *are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness*, (or benignity:) love precedeth, joy and peace follow as its [a]constant attendants, gentleness and benignity come after as its certain effects.

Gal. v. 22. Eph. v. 12. Col. iii. 12.

[a] Eldest daughter.

Love indeed is the sweetest of all passions, ever accompanied with a secret delectation and pleasant sense; whenever it is placed upon a good object, when it acteth in a rational way, when it is vigorous, it must needs yield much joy.

It therefore greatly conduceth to our happiness, or rather alone doth suffice to constitute us happy.

VIII. (3.) Charity will preserve us from divers external mischiefs and inconveniences, to which our life is exposed, and which otherwise we shall incur.

If we have not charity towards men, we shall have enmity with them; and upon that do wait troops of mischief; we shall enjoy nothing quietly or safely, we shall do nothing without opposition or contention; no conversation, no commerce will be pleasant; clamour, obloquy, tumult, and trouble will surround us; we shall live in perpetual danger, the enmity of the meanest and weakest creature being formidable.

But all such mischiefs charity will prevent or remove; damming up the fountains, or extirpating the roots of them: for who will hate a person that apparently loveth him? who can be so barbarous or base as to hurt that man, whom he findeth ever ready to do himself good? what

brute, what devil can find in his heart to be a foe to him who is a sure friend to all[f]? No publican can be so wretchedly vile, no sinner so destitute of goodness; for, *If*, saith our Lord, upon common experience, *ye love them which love you, what reward have ye; do not even the publicans the same?* and, *If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same:* it seemeth beyond the greatest degeneracy and corruption whereof human nature is capable, to requite charity with enmity, yea not to return some kindness for it: Τίς ὁ κακώσων; *Who*, saith St. Peter, *is he that will do you hurt, if ye be followers of that which is good;* or imitators of him that is good, (of the sovereign goodness?) none surely can be so unjust, or so unworthy.

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Matt. v. 46.

1 Pet. iii. 13. Ἐὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μιμηταὶ γένησθε.

As charity restraineth us from doing any wrong, or yielding any offence to others in thought, in word, in deed; from entertaining any bad conceits without ground, from hatching any mischievous designs against our neighbour; from using any harsh, virulent, biting language; from any rugged, discourteous, disobliging behaviour; from any wrongful, rigorous, severe dealing toward him; from any contemptuous pride, or supercilious arrogance: so it consequently will defend us from the like treatment; for scarce any man is so malicious as without any provocation to do mischief; no man is so incorrigibly savage, as to persist in committing outrage upon perfect innocence, joined with patience, with meekness, with courtesy: charity will melt the hardest heart, and charm the fiercest spirit; it will bind the most violent hand, it will still the most obstreperous tongue; it will reconcile the most offended, most prejudiced heart: it is the best guard that can be of our safety from assaults, of our interest from damage, of our reputation from slander, detraction and reproach[g]

Vincit malos pertinax bonitas. *Sen.*

[f] Τίς δ' ἂν ᾖ ἐχθρὸς ἰυλόγως γένοιτο ἀνδρὸς; οὐδὲ μίαν οὐδαμῶς παρίχοντος αἰτίαν ἔχθρας; *Clem. Str.* vii. p. 532.

Chrys. in 1 *Thess. Or.* iv. Κἂν θηρίον ἐκεῖνος ᾖ, κἂν λίθος, &c.

Οὐδεὶς ἐχθρὸς τῷ σπουδαίῳ. *Hier.*

Οὐκ οἶοντε τὸν ἀγαπώμενον μὴ ἀγαπᾶν. *Chrys. in Gen. Or.* xxxii.

[g] Carbones ignis congregabis super caput ejus: non in maledictum et con-

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If you would have examples of this, experience will afford many; and some we have in the sacred records commended to our observation: Esau was a rough man, and one who had been exceedingly provoked by his brother Jacob: yet how did meek and respectful demeanour overcome him! so that *Esau*, it is said in the history, *ran to meet him*, (Jacob,) *and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.*

Gen. xxxii. 20.

Gen. xxxiii. 4.

Saul was a man possessed with a furious envy and spite against David; yet into what expressions did the sense of his kind dealing force him! *Is this thy voice, my son David?—Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil:—behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.* So doth charity subdue and triumph over the most inveterate prejudices, and the most violent passions of men.

1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. xxvi. 17, 21.

Cadit statim simultas ab altera parte deserta. *Sen. de Ir.* ii. 34.

If peace and quiet be desirable things, as certainly they are, and that form implieth, when by wishing peace with men, we are understood to wish all good to them; it is charity only that preserveth them: which more surely than any power or policy doth quash all war and strife; for war must have parties, and strife implieth resistance: be it the first or second blow which maketh the fray, charity will avoid it; for it neither will strike the first in offence, nor the second in revenge. Charity therefore may well be styled *the bond of peace*, it being that only which can knit men's souls together, and keep them from breaking out into dissensions.

Eph. iv. 3.

It alone is that which will prevent bickering and clashing about points of credit or interest: if we love not our neighbour, or tender not his good as our own, we shall be ever in competition and debate with him about those things, not suffering him to enjoy any thing quietly; struggling to get above him, scrambling with him for what is to be had.

IX. (4.) As charity preserveth from mischiefs, so it

demnationem, ut plerique existimant, sed in correctionem et pœnitudinem; ut superatus beneficiis, excoctus fervore charitatis, inimicus esse desistat. *Hier. in Pelag.* i. cap. 9.

procureth many sweet comforts and fair accommodations of life.

Friendship is a most useful and pleasant thing, and charity will conciliate good store thereof; it is apt to make all men friends; for love is the only general philter and effectual charm of souls; the fire which kindleth all it toucheth, and propagateth itself in every capable subject; and such a subject is every man in whom humanity is not quite extinct; and hardly can any such man be, seeing every man hath some good humour in him, some blood, some kindly juice flowing in his veins; no man wholly doth consist of dusky melancholy, or fiery choler; whence all men may be presumed liable to the powerful impressions of charity: its mild and serene countenance, its sweet and gentle speech, its courteous and obliging gesture, its fair dealing, its benign conversation, its readiness to do any good or service to any man, will insinuate good-will and respect unto all hearts.

Ego tibi monstrabo amatorium sine medicamento, sine herba, sine ullius veneficæ carmine, si vis amari, ama. *Sen. Ep.* ix.

It thence will encompass a man with friends, with many guards of his safety, with many supports of his fortune, with many patrons of his reputation, with many succourers of his necessity, with many comforters of his affliction: for is a charitable man in danger, who will not defend him? is he falling, who will not uphold him? is he falsely accused or aspersed, who will not vindicate him? is he in distress, who will not pity him? who will not endeavour to relieve and restore him? who will insult over his calamity? will it not in such cases appear a common duty, a common interest to assist and countenance a common friend, a common benefactor to mankind?

Whereas most of our life is spent in society and discourse, charity is that which doth season and sweeten these, rendering them grateful to others, and commodious to one's self: for a charitable heart is a sweet spring, from whence do issue streams of wholesome and pleasant discourse; it not being troubled with any bad passion or design, which may sour or foul conversation, doth ever make him good company to others, and rendereth them such to himself; which is a mighty convenience. In short, *a* charitable man, or, *true lover of men will*, saith

Prov. xv. 26. xvi. 24.

SERM. XXVIII. St. Chrysostom, *inhabit earth as a heaven, every where carrying a serenity with him, and plaiting ten thousand crowns for himself*[h].

X. (5.) Charity doth in every estate yield advantages suitable thereto; bettering it, and improving it to our benefit.

It rendereth prosperity not only innocent and safe, but useful and fruitful to us; we then indeed enjoy it, if we feel the comfort of doing good by it: it solaceth adversity, considering that it doth not arise as a punishment or fruit of ill doing to others; that it is not attended with the deserved ill will of men; that no man hath reason to delight for it, or insult over us therein; that we may probably expect commiseration and relief, having been ready to shew the like to others.

It tempereth both states: for in prosperity a man cannot be transported with immoderate joy, when so many objects of pity and grief do present themselves before him, which he is apt deeply to resent; in adversity he cannot be dejected with extreme sorrow, being refreshed by so many good successes befalling those whom he loveth: one condition will not puff him up, being sensible of his neighbour's misery; the other will not sink him down, having complacence in his neighbour's welfare. Uncharitableness (proceeding from contrary causes, and producing contrary effects) doth spoil all conditions, rendering prosperity fruitless, and adversity comfortless.

XI. (6.) We may consider, that secluding the exercise of charity, all the goods and advantages we have (our best faculties of nature, our best endowments of soul, the gifts of Providence, and the fruits of our industry) will become vain and fruitless, or noxious and baneful to us; for what is our reason worth, what doth it signify, if it serveth only for contriving sorry designs, or transacting petty affairs about ourselves? what is wit good for, if it must be spent only in making sport, or hatching mischief? to what purpose is knowledge, if it be not applied to the instruction, direction, admonition, or consolation of

[h] Τὴν γὴν οὕτως ὡς ἔτὸν οὐρανὸν οἰκήσει, πανταχοῦ γαλήνης ἀπολαύων, καὶ μυρίους ἑαυτῷ πλέκων στεφάνους. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Or.* xxxii.

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others? what mattereth abundance of wealth, if it be to be uselessly hoarded up, or vainly flung away in wicked or wanton profuseness; if it be not employed in affording succour to our neighbour's indigency and distress? what is our credit but a mere noise or a puff of air, if we do not give a solidity and substance to it, by making it an engine of doing good? what is our virtue itself, if it be buried in obscurity or choked with idleness, yielding no benefit to others by the lustre of its example, or by its real influence? what is any talent, if it be wrapped up in a napkin; any light, if it be hid under a bushel; any thing private, if it be not by good use spread out and improved to public benefit? If these gifts do minister only to our own particular advantage, to our personal convenience, glory, or pleasure, how slim things are they, how inconsiderable is their worth!

Pau'um sepultæ distat inertiæ Celata virtus. *Hor. Carm.* iv. 9.

But they being managed by charity become precious and excellent things; they are great in proportion to the greatness of their use, or the extent of their beneficial influence: as they carry forth good to the world, so they bring back various benefits to ourselves; they return into our bosom laden with respect and reward from God and from man; they yield thanks and commendation from without, they work comfort and satisfaction within: yea, which is infinitely more considerable, and enhanceth the price of our gifts to a vast rate, they procure glory and blessing to God; for *hereby is God glorified, if we bring forth much fruit:* and no good fruit can grow from any other stock than that of charity.

Luke vi. 38.

John xv. 8. Phil. i. 11. Matt. v. 16. Prov. iv. 31. 2 Cor. ix. 11.

Uncharitableness therefore should be loathed and shunned by us, as that which robbeth us of all our ornaments and advantages; which indeed marreth and corrupteth all our good things; which turneth blessings into curses, and rendereth the means of our welfare to be causes of mischief to us; for without charity a man can have no goods, but goods worldly and temporal; and such goods thence do prove impertinent baubles, burdensome encumbrances, dangerous snares, baneful poisons to him.

1 Cor. xiii.

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XII. (7.) Charity doth hugely advance and amplify a man's state, putting him into the possession or fruition of all good things; it will endow, enrich, ennoble, embellish us with all the world hath of precious, of glorious, of fair; by appropriation thereof to ourselves, and acquiring of a real interest therein. What men commonly out of fond self-love do vainly affect, that infallibly by being charitable they may compass, the engrossing to themselves all kinds of good: most easily, most innocently, in a compendious and sure way, without any sin or blame, without any care or pain, without any danger or trouble, they may come to attain and to enjoy whatever in common esteem is desirable or valuable; they may, without greedy avarice, or the carkings, the drudgeries, the disgraces going with it, procure to themselves abundant wealth; without fond ambition, or the difficulties, the hazards, the emulations, the strugglings to which it is liable, they may arrive to great honour; without sordid voluptuousness, or the satieties, the maladies, the regrets consequent thereon, they may enjoy all pleasure; without any wildness or wantonness, pride, luxury, sloth, any of its temptations and snares, they may have all prosperity; they may get all learning and wisdom without laborious study, all virtue and goodness without the fatigues of continual exercise: for are not all these things yours, if you do esteem them so, if you do make them so by finding much delight and satisfaction in them? doth not your neighbour's wealth enrich you, if you feel content in his possessing and using it? doth not his preferment advance you, if your spirit riseth with it in a gladsome complacence? doth not his pleasure delight you, if you relish his enjoyment of it? doth not his prosperity bless you, if your heart doth exult and triumph in it? do not his endowments adorn you, if you like them, if you commend them, if the use of them doth minister comfort and joy to you? This is the divine magic of charity, which conveyeth all things into our hands, and instateth us in a dominion of them, whereof nothing can disseize us; by virtue whereof *being*, as St. Paul speaketh of himself, *sorrow-*

2 Cor. vi. 10.

ful, yet we always rejoice; having nothing, we yet possess all things. SERM. XXVIII.

Neither is this property in things merely imaginary or fantastic, (like that of lunatics, who fancy themselves mighty princes or rich aldermen,) but very substantial and real; yea far more real to the charitable person, than it is commonly to those, who in legal or popular account are masters of them: for how is propriety in things otherwise considerable, than for the content and pleasure which they yield to the presumed owner? the which if a charitable person abundantly draweth from them, why are they not truly his? why is not the tree his, if he can pull and taste its fruits without injury or blame? yea, doth not the propriety more really belong to him as to the gross possessor, if he doth equally enjoy the benefit, without partaking the inconveniencies and impurities adherent to them; if he taste them innocently and purely, without being cloyed, without being distracted, without being puffed, without being encumbered, ensnared, or corrupted by them?

A charitable man therefore can never, in a moral account, be poor, or vile, or anywise miserable; except all the world should be cast into penury and distress: for while his neighbour hath anything, he will enjoy it; *rejoicing with those that rejoice*, as the Apostle doth enjoin.

XIII. (8.) If therefore we love ourselves, we must love others, and do others good; charitable beneficence carrying with it so many advantages to ourselves.

We by charitable complacence do partake in their welfare, reaping pleasure from all the fruits of their industry and fortune.

We by charitable assistance do enable and dispose them to make grateful returns of succour in our need.

We thence assuredly shall obtain their good-will, their esteem, their commendation; we shall maintain peaceable and comfortable intercourse with them, in safety, in quiet, in good humour and cheer.

Besides all other benefits we shall get that of their pray-

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ers; the which of all prayers have a most favourable audience and assured efficacy: for if the complaints and curses of those who are oppressed or neglected by uncharitable dealing do certainly reach God's ears, and pull down vengeance from above; how much more will the intercessions and blessings of the poor pierce the heavens, and thence draw recompence! seeing God is more ready to perform his proper and pleasant works of bounty and mercy, than to execute his *strange* and unpleasing *work* of punishment; especially the blessings of the poor being always accompanied with praises and glorifications of him: who enableth and disposeth men to do good; the which praises will ever be reckoned on the account of him who drew them forth by his beneficence: it will be, as the Apostle saith, *fruit redounding to his account*, while *it aboundeth by many thanksgivings to God.*

James v. 4. Deut. xxiv. 15. Ecclus. iv. 6. Psal. lxii. 12. Mic. 7, 18. Isa. xxviii. 21. Phil. iv. 17. 2 Cor. ix. 11. viii. 19.

So in virtue of charity the poorest man amply may requite the wealthiest; and a peasant may outdo the greatest prince in beneficence.

XIV. We may consider, that charity is a practice specially grateful to God, and a most excellent part of our duty; not only because he hath commanded it as such with greatest earnestness; nor only because it doth constitute us in nearest resemblance of him; but as a peculiar expression of love and good-will toward him: for if we love him, we must for his sake have a kindness for his friends, we must tender his interests, we must favour his reputation, we must desire his content and pleasure, we must contribute our endeavours toward the furtherance of these his concerns. Seeing then God is an assured friend to all men, seeing he hath a property in all men, (for he is God and Lord of all,) seeing he much concerneth himself for all men's welfare; seeing from the prosperity, from the virtue, from the happiness of every man he gaineth honour and praise; seeing he is greatly satisfied and delighted in the good of men; we also must love them; otherwise we greatly shall disoblige and disgust him.

Ezek. xviii.

Is it not indeed a practice guilty of notorious enmity

toward him, inconsistent with the maintenance of any friendship or peace with him, to discord in affection from him, maligning or disaffecting those whom he dearly loveth and favoureth; who are so nearly allied to him by manifold relations, as his creatures, his subjects, his servants, his children, whom he designeth and desireth to crown with eternal glory and bliss [i]?

XV. Seeing God vouchsafeth to esteem whatever is done in charity to our neighbour (if done with an honest and pious mind, as to his friends) to be done unto himself; that in feeding our indigent neighbour we refresh him; in clothing our neighbour we comfort him; we do by charitable beneficence oblige God, and become in a manner benefactors to him; and as such assuredly shall be requited by him: and is not this a high privilege, a great honour, a mighty advantage to us? If a man had opportunity to do that, which his prince would acknowledge a courtesy and obligation to him, what a happiness would he account it! and how far more considerable is it, that we can so easily do that which the Lord of all, in whose disposal all things are, will take so kindly at our hands!

XVI. We may consider, that charity is a very feasible and very easy duty; it requireth no sore pain, no grievous trouble, no great cost: for it consisteth only in good-will, and that which naturally springeth thence; willingness and cheerfulness are necessary ingredients or adjuncts of it; the which imply facility [k]: whence the weakest and poorest man is no less able to perform it than the greatest potentate; his heart may be as charitable, though his hand cannot be so liberal: one of the most noble and

Rom. xii. 8. 2 Cor. ix. 7. viii. 12.

Luke xxi. 2.

[i] Ὅταν συγῇ τις ἄνδρα, τὸν Θεὸς φιλεῖ, οὗτος μιγίστην μωρίαν κατεισάγει, φανερῶς γὰρ αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ κορύσσεται. *Vid. Anthol.*

Δεῖ γὰρ φιλεῖν ἐκεῖνον, ὃν Θεὸς φιλεῖ. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Or.* xxxii.

[k] Ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη μετὰ τοῦ κέρδους πολλὴν ἔχει καὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν, ἧ πόνου οὐδένα. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Or.* xxxii.

Ποῖος πόνος μὴ κακῶς εἰπεῖν ἀδένα; ποία δυσκολία ἀπαλλαγῆναι φθόνου καὶ βασκανίας; ποῖος μόχθος μὴ κακῶς εἰπεῖν μηδένα; *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. ἡ.

SERM. XXVIII. Matt. x. 42.

most famous charities that ever was, was the giving two mites; and the *giving a cup of cold water* is the instance of that beneficence, which shall not fail of being rewarded [l].

XVII. We may consider that charity is the best, the most assured, the most easy and expedite way or instrument of performing all other duties toward our neighbour: if we would dispatch, love, and all is done; if we would be perfect in obedience, love, and we shall not fail in any point; for *love is the fulfilling of the law;* love *is the bond of perfectness:* would we be secure in the practice of justice, of meekness, of humility toward all men, of constant fidelity toward our friends, of gentle moderation toward our enemies, of loyalty toward our superiors, of benignity toward our inferiors; if we would be sure to purify our minds from ill thoughts, to restrain our tongues from ill speaking, to abstain from all bad demeanour and dealing; it is but having charity, and infallibly you will do all this: for *love worketh no ill to its neighbour; love thinketh no evil; love behaveth not itself unseemly.*

Rom. xiii. 10. Gal. v. 14.

Rom. xii 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

Would we discharge all our duties without any reluctancy or regret, with much satisfaction and pleasure? love will certainly dispose us thereto; for it always acteth freely and cheerfully, without any compulsion or straining; it is ever accompanied with delectation [m]: if we would know its way and virtue of acting, we may see it represented in the proceeding of Jacob, who being inspired by love did contentedly and without regret endure so long and hard toil, such disappointments and such affronts: *And Jacob*, saith the text, *served seven years for Rachel;*

It is winged. It is fire.

Gen xxix. 20.

[l] At nunc cum omnia quæ difficiliora sunt vel modica ex parte faciamus, hoc solum non facimus quod et factu facilius est, et absque quo cassa sunt universa quæ facimus: jejunii corpus sentit injuriam, vigiliæ carnem macerant—hæc omnia sunt qui faciant, sola charitas sine labore est. *Hier. in Gal.* v. 13.

[m] Εἰ γὰρ ἅπαντες ἠγάπων καὶ ἠγαπῶντο, οὐδὲν ἂν ἠδίκησεν οὐδείς, &c. *Chrys. in Cor. Or.* xxxii.

Amor obsequitur sponte, gratis obtemperat, libere reveretur. *Bern. ad Eug. Prol.* Vid. Bern. Ep. xi. p. 1404.

and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her. SERM. XXVIII.

This is the root, from whence voluntary obedience doth naturally grow; if it be planted in our heart, we need not fear but that all kind of good fruit will sprout forth into conversation and practice [n].

But without it we shall not ever perform any good work perfectly, steadily, in a kindly manner: no other principle will serve; if we are only moved by whip and spur, driven on by fear, or incited by hope, we shall go forward unwillingly and dully, often halting, ever flagging: those principles which do put slaves and mercenaries on action, as they are not so noble and worthy, so neither are they so effectual and sure; as ambition, vain-glory, self-interest, design of security, of profit, of compliance with the expectation of men, &c.

XVIII. Charity giveth worth, form, and life to all virtue, so that without it no action is valuable in itself, or acceptable to God. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv.

Sever it from courage; and what is that, but the boldness or fierceness of a beast? from meekness; and what is that, but the softness of a woman, or weakness of a child? from courtesy; and what is that, but affectation or artifice? from justice; what is that, but humour or policy? from wisdom; what is that, but craft and subtilty?

What meaneth faith without it, but dry opinion; what hope, but blind presumption; what alms-doing, but ambitious ostentation; what undergoing martyrdom, but stiffness or sturdiness of resolution; what is devotion, but glozing or mocking with God? what is any practice, how specious soever in appearance, or materially good, but an issue of self-conceit or self-will, of servile fear or mercenary design? *Though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though* 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.

[n] Ὁ γὰρ φιλῶν οὐχ οὕτως ἐπιτάττων, ὡς ἐπιτασσόμενος χαίρει &c. *Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or.* xxxii.

SERM. XXVIII. *I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

But charity doth sanctify every action, and impregnate all our practice with a savour of goodness, turning all we do into virtue; it is true fortitude and gallantry indeed, when a man out of charity and hearty design to promote his neighbour's good doth encounter dangers and difficulties; it is genuine meekness, when a man out of charity, and unwillingness to hurt his neighbour, doth patiently comport with injuries and discourtesies; it is virtuous courtesy, when cordial affection venteth itself in civil language, in respectful deportment, in obliging performances; it is excellent justice, when a man, regarding his neighbour's case as his own, doth unto him as he would have it done to himself; it is admirable wisdom, which sagaciously contriveth and dextrously manageth things with the best advantage toward its neighbour's good: it is a worthy faith, which being *spirited* and *actuated* by charity, doth produce goodly fruits of beneficence; it is a sound and solid hope, which is grounded on that everlasting foundation of charity, which *never doth fail*, or fall away; it is sincere alms, which not only the hand, but the heart doth reach forth; it is an acceptable sacrifice, which is kindled by the holy fire of fervent affection; it is a pure devotion, which is offered up with a calm and benign mind, resembling the disposition of that goodness which it adoreth.

Gal. v. 6. James ii. 26.

1 Cor. iii. 8.

1 Tim ii. 8 Matt. vi. 23.

If therefore we would do any thing well, if we would not lose all the virtue, and forfeit all the benefit of what we perform, we must follow the rule of St. Paul, *to do all our works in charity.*

1 Cor. xvi. 14.

XIX. So great benefits doth charity yield; yet if it did not yield any of them, it would deserve and claim our observance; without regard to its sweet fruits and beneficial consequences, it were to be embraced and cherished; for it carrieth a reward and a heaven in itself; the very same which constituteth God himself infinitely happy, and which beatifieth every blessed spirit,

in proportion to its capacity and exercise thereof; a man doth abundantly enjoy himself in that steady composedness, and savoury complacence of mind, which ever doth attend it; and as the present sense, so is the memory of it, or the good conscience of having done good, very delicious and satisfactory. SERM. XXVIII.

As it is a rascally delight (tempered with regret, and vanishing into bitterness) which men feel in wreaking spite, or doing mischief; such as they cannot reflect upon without disgust and condemning their base impotency of soul: so is the pleasure which charity doth breed altogether pure, grateful to the mind, and increasing by reflection; never perishing or decaying: a man eternally enjoying the good he hath done, by remembering and ruminating thereon. In fine,

XX. Whereas the great obstacle to charity is self-love, or an extravagant fondness of our own interests, yet, uncharitableness destroyeth that: for how can we love ourselves if we do want charity? how can we appear lovely to ourselves, if we are destitute of so worthy an endowment? or if we can discern those unworthy dispositions, which accompany the defect of it; can we esteem so mean, so vile, so ugly things as we then are? Aristotle saith, that bad men cannot be friends to themselves, because *having in themselves nothing amiable, they can feel no affection toward themselves;* and certainly, if we are not stark blind, or can but see wrath, spite, envy, revenge, in their own black and ugly hue, we must needs (if they do possess our souls) grow odious and despicable to ourselves. And being they do rob us of so many great benefits, and bring so many grievous mischiefs on us, we cannot be otherwise than enemies to ourselves by cherishing them, or suffering them to lodge in us.

Οὐδὲν φιλητὸν ἔχοντες, οὐδὲν φιλικὸν πάσχουσι. *Arist. Eth.* ix. 4.

These are some very considerable inducements to the practice of this great virtue; there are divers others of a higher nature, derivable from the inmost bowels of our religion, grounded on its peculiar constitution and obligations, which I shall now forbear to mention, reserving them for a particular discourse by themselves.

SERM. XXVIII. Quinquag. Sund.

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake.

SERMON XXIX.

OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

Rom. xii. 18.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

THIS chapter containeth many excellent precepts and wholesome advices, (scarce any portion of holy Scripture so many in so little compass.) From among them I have selected one, alas, but to seasonable and pertinent to the unhappy condition of our distracted age, wherein to observe this and such like injunctions, is by many esteemed an impossibility, by others a wonder, by some a crime. It hath an apt coherence with, yet no necessary dependence upon, the parts adjoining; whence I may presume to treat upon it distinctly by itself; and without farther preface or circumstance we may consider several particulars therein.

I. And first, concerning the advice itself, or the substance of the duty charged on us, εἰρηνεύειν, (*to be in peace*, or *live peaceably*,) we may take notice, that whether, according to the more usual acception, it be applied to the public estate of things, or, as here, doth relate only to private conversation, it doth import,

1. Not barely a negation of doing, or suffering harm, or an abstinence from strife and violence, (for a mere strangeness this may be, a want of occasion, or a truce, rather than a peace,) but a positive amity, and disposition to perform such kind offices, without which good correspondence among men cannot subsist. For they who by

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reason of distance of place, non-acquaintance, or defect of opportunity, maintain no intercourse, cannot properly be said to be in peace with one another; but those who have frequent occasion of commerce, whose conditions require interchanges of courtesy and relief, who are some way obliged and disposed to afford needful succour, and safe retreat to each other; these may be said to live in peace together, and these only, it being in a manner impossible, that they who are not disposed to do good to others (if they have power and opportunity) should long abstain from doing harm.

2. Living peaceably implies not a few transitory performances, proceeding from casual humour, or the like; but a constant, stable, and well-settled condition of being; a continual cessation from injury, and promptitude to do good offices. For as one blow doth not make a battle, nor one skirmish a war; so cannot single forbearances from doing mischief, or some few particular acts of kindness, (such as mere strangers may afford each other,) be worthily styled a being in peace; but an habitual inclination to these, a firm and durable estate of innocence and beneficence.

3. Living in peace supposes a reciprocal condition of being: not only a performing good, and forbearing to do bad offices, but a receiving the like treatment from others. For he, that being assaulted is constrained to stand upon his defence, may not be said to be in peace, though his not being so (involuntarily) is not to be imputed to him.

4. Being in peace imports not only an outward cessation of violence and seeming demonstration of amity, but an inward will and resolution to continue therein. For he that intends, when occasion is presented, to do mischief to another, is nevertheless an enemy, because more secret and dangerous: an ambuscado is no less a piece of war, than confronting the enemy in open field. Proclaiming and denouncing signify, but good and ill intention constitute, and are the souls of peace and war. From these considerations we may infer a description of being in

peace, viz. that it is, to bear mutual good-will, to continue in amity, to maintain good correspondence, to be upon terms of mutual courtesy and benevolence; to be disposed to perform reciprocally all offices of humanity; assistance in need, comfort in sorrow, relief in distress; to please and satisfy one another, by advancing the innocent delight, and promoting the just advantage of each other; to converse with confidence and security, without suspicion, on either hand, of any fraudulent, malicious, or hurtful practices against either: or, negatively, not to be in a state of enmity, personal hatred, pertinacious anger, jealousy, envy, or ill-will; not to be apt to provoke, to reproach, to harm or hinder another, nor to have reasonable grounds of expecting the same bad usage from others; to be removed from danger of vexatious quarrels, intercourse of odious language, offending others, or being disquieted one's self. This I take to be the meaning of living or being in peace, differing only in degree of obligation, and latitude of object, from the state of friendship properly so called, and opposed to a condition of enmity, defiance, contention, hatred, suspicion, animosity. SERM. XXIX.

II. In the next place we may consider the object of this duty, signified in those words, *With all men.* We often meet in Scripture with exhortations directed peculiarly to Christians, to be at peace among themselves; as Mark ix. 5. our Saviour lays this injunction upon his disciples, εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις, *Have peace one with another;* inculcated by St. Paul upon the Thessalonians in the same words: and the like we have in the second Epistle to Timothy, chap. ii. ver. 22. *Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart:* and to the Romans, (xiv. 19.) *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.* But here the duty hath a more large and comprehensive object; πάντες ἄνθρωποι, *all men:* as likewise it hath in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 14. *Pursue peace with all men:* with all men, without any exception, with men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians; of all sects and religions; per- 1 Thess. v. 13. Vid. Eph. iv. 3.

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secuting Jews and idolatrous Heathens; (for of such consisted the generality of men at that time; and so St. Paul expressly in a like advice, (1 Cor. x. 32, 33. *Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; even as I please all men.*) And I may add, by evident parity of reason, with men of all degrees and estates, high and low, noble and base, rich and poor; of all tempers and dispositions, meek and angry, gentle and froward, pliable and perverse; of all endowments, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious; of all judgments and persuasions, orthodox and heretical, peaceable and schismatical persons: this universally vast and boundless term, *all men*, contains them all. Neither is there any evading our obligation to this duty, by pretending about others, that they differ from us in humour and complexion of soul, that they entertain opinions irreconcileably contrary to ours; that they adhere to sects and parties which we dislike and disavow; that they are not so virtuous, so religious, so holy as they should be, or at least not in such a manner as we would have them: for be this allegation true or false, it will not excuse us; while they are not divested of human nature, and can truly lay claim to the name and title of men, we are by virtue of this precept obliged to live peaceably with them.

III. We may consider the qualification of the duty here expressed, and what those words mean; *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you.* To which purpose we may advert, from our description of living peaceably, that it consists mainly of two parts: one *active*, or proceeding from us, and terminated on others—to bear good-will, to do good offices, to procure the profit, delight, and welfare, to abstain from the displeasure, damage, and disturbance of others: the other *passive*, issuing from others, and terminated on ourselves—that they be well affected towards us, inclinable to do us good, and nowise disposed to wish, design, or bring any harm, trouble, or vexation upon us. Whereof the former is altogether in our power, consisting of acts or omissions depending upon our free choice and counsel: and we are directly obliged to it, by virtue

of those words, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, *as much as lieth in you:* the latter is not fully so, yet commonly there be probable means of effecting it, which we are hence bound to use, though sometimes they may fail of success. For the words εἰ δυνατὸν, *if it be possible*, as they signify the utmost endeavour is to be employed, and that no difficulty (beneath the degree of impossibility) can discharge us from it; so they intimate plainly, that sometime our labour may be lost, and our purpose defeated; and that by the default of others it may be impossible we should arrive to a peaceable condition of life with all men. However, by this rule we are directed not only ourselves not to infringe the terms of peace toward others, but to endeavour earnestly by all honest and prudent means to obtain the good-will, favour, and respect of others, by which they may be disposed to all friendly correspondence with us, and not to disturb the quiet and tranquillity of our lives.

Having thus by way of explication superficially glanced upon the words, we will proceed to a more large and punctual review of them; and shall consider more distinctly the particulars grossly mentioned: and,

I. What those especial duties are, included in this more comprehensive one of living peaceably with all men; both those which are directly required of us, as the necessary causes or immediate results of a peaceable disposition in us toward others; and also those which are to be performed by us, as just and reasonable means conducible to beget or preserve in others a peaceable inclination toward us. These I shall consider promiscuously: and,

1. We are by this precept directly obliged heartily to love, that is, to bear good-will to, to wish well to, to rejoice in the welfare, and commiserate the adversities of all men: at least not to hate, or bear ill-will to, to desire or design the harm, to repine at the happy success, or delight in the misfortunes of any: for as it is very hard to maintain peace and amicable correspondence with those we do not truly love; so it is absolutely impossible to do it long with those we hate: this satanic passion (or disposition of soul) always prompting the mind possessed therewith to the contrivance

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and execution of mischief; whence he that hates his brother is said to be a murderer, as having in him that bitter root, from whence, if power and occasion conspire, will probably spring that most extreme of outrages, and capital breach of peace. Love is the only sure cement, that knits and combines men in friendly society; and hatred, the certain fountain of that violence, which rends and dissolves it. We cannot easily hurt or strive with those we love and wish well to: we cannot possibly long agree with those we hate and malign. Peace without love can be esteemed little more than politic dissimulation; and peace with hatred is really nothing less than an artificial disguise, or an insidious covert of enmity.

1 John iii. 15.

2. We are hence obliged to perform all kind offices of humanity, which the condition of any man can require, and may by us be performed without considerable inconvenience or detriment to ourselves or others. When, for the preservation or comfortable accommodation of life, they need our help or our advice, we are readily to afford them; when they are in want or distress, we are to minister to them what comfort and relief we can. We are, upon this very score, to obey that injunction of St. Paul to the Galatians, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.* For without this beneficence a man's carriage (though otherwise harmless and inoffensive) appears rather a suspicious strangeness, than a peaceable demeanour, and naturally produces an enmity in those that are concerned in it. For he to whom, being pressed with necessity, requisite assistance is denied, will infallibly be apt to think himself not only neglected and disesteemed, but affronted also and injured; (need, in the general conceit of men, and especially of those that feel it, begetteth a kind of title to some competent relief;) and consequently will heinously resent, and complain bitterly of such supposed wrong, and, if ever he become able, repay it with advantage. And much more are we upon the same account not to perform ill offices toward any man; not to disturb him in the enjoyment of his innocent pleasure, nor

Gal. vi. 10.

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to hinder him in the advancing his lawful profit, nor to interrupt him in the prosecution of his reasonable designs; nor anywise to vex and grieve him needlessly; and (above all) not to detain him in, nor to aggravate his affliction. For these are actual violations of peace, and impediments of good correspondence among men. Farther,

3. In this duty of living peaceably is included an obligation to all kind of just and honest dealing with all men; punctually to observe contracts, impartially to decide controversies, equally to distribute rewards, to injure no man either in his estate, by violent or fraudulent encroachments upon his just possessions; or in his reputation, by raising or dispersing slanderous reports concerning him: for these courses of all others are most destructive to peace, and upon the pretence of them most quarrels that ever were have been commenced.

Justice in its own nature is, and by the common agreement of men hath been designed the guardian of peace and sovereign remedy of contention. But not to insist long upon such obvious subjects,

4. It much conduceth to the preservation of peace, and upholding amicable correspondence in our dealings and transactions with men, liable to doubt and debate, not to insist upon nice and rigorous points of right, not to take all advantage offered us, not to deal hard measure, not to use extremities, to the damage or hinderance of others, especially when no comparable benefit will thence accrue to ourselves. For such proceedings, as they discover in us little kindness to, or tenderness of our neighbour's good, so they exceedingly exasperate them, and persuade them we are their enemies, and render them ours, and so utterly destroy peace between us. Whenas abating something from the height and strictness of our pretences, and a favourable recession in such cases will greatly engage men to have an honourable opinion, and a peaceable affection toward us.

Vide Tit. iii. 2. ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπιεικεῖς.

5. If we would attain to this peaceable estate of life, we must use toward all men such demonstrations of respect

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and courtesy, which according to their degree and station custom doth entitle them to, or which upon the common score of humanity they may be reasonably deemed to expect from us; respective gestures, civil salutations, free access, affable demeanour, cheerful looks, and courteous discourse. These, as they betoken good-will in them that use them, so they beget, cherish, and increase it in those, whom they refer to: and the necessary fruit of mutual good-will is peace. But the contrary carriages, contemptuous or disregardful behaviour, difficulty of admission to converse, a tetrical or sullen aspect, rough and fastidious language, as they discover a mind averse from friendly commerce, so they beget a more potent disdain in others: men generally (especially those of generous and hearty temper) valuing their due respect beyond all other interests, and more contentedly brooking injury than neglect. Whence this skill and dexterity of deportment (though immediately, and in its own nature, of no great worth, and regulating actions of small importance, gestures, looks, and forms of speech,) yet because it is a nurse of peace, and greatly contributes to the delightfulness of society, hath been always much commended, and hath obtained a conspicuous place in the honourable rank of virtues, under the titles of courtesy, comity, and affability; and the opposites thereto, rudeness and rusticity, have been deservedly counted and called vices in morality.

6. This precept directly prohibits the use of all reproachful, scornful, and provoking language; these being the immediate results of enmity, and actual breaches of peace. Whence St. Paul conjoins, Μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, and ἀμάχους εἶναι, *To speak evil of no man, to be no quarrellers,* (or fighters,) *but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.* For war is managed (and that with more deadly animosity) with the tongue, as well as with the hand. (*There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword,* saith Solomon; and *whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,* saith David.) Words are with more anguish felt than blows; their wounds are more in-

Tit. iii. 2.

Prov. xii. 18.
Psal. lvii. 4. lxiv. 3.

curable, and they leave a deeper scar[a]. Men usually dread more the loss of their honour than their lives, and take more grievously the ravishing of their credit than the depredation of their estate. Living peaceably therefore implies as much abstaining from opprobrious words as injurious actions; yea more; for reviling is not only a violation of peace, but a dishonourable waging of war; like shooting arrows dipt in poison, and discharging slugs against our neighbour's reputation[b]: practices condemned by all as base and inhuman, and contrary to the laws of a noble warfare; being arguments, we affect rather our adversary's utter ruin, than a gallant victory over him. There be fair ways of disputing our cause, without contumelious reflections upon persons; and the errors of men may be sufficiently refuted without satirical virulency. One good reason, modestly propounded, hath in it naturally more power and efficacy to convince him that it in a mistake, or to confound him with shame that is guilty of a fault, than ten thousand scoffs and ignominious taunts. We are to express those deeds of nature, (the performance of which is concealed, as containing in it something of supposed turpitude,) we are wont to veil them in such modest circumlocutions, that by the hearers, without offence to their bashfulness, may sufficiently be understood: So when it is needful or expedient to confute the opinions, or reprove the actions of men, if we either charitably design their amendment, or desire to maintain peaceable correspondence with them, it behoves that we do not by using the most broad and distasteful language immoderately trespass upon their modesty and patience; that (to use Seneca's phrase) we do *agere curam non tantum salutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis.* De Clem. lib. i. c. 17. *Have a care not only to cure the wound, but to leave a comely scar,* and not to deform him, whom we endeavour

Vid. egregium Antonini locum. lib. xi. §. 18. 9. ἀδήκτως.

[a] Ποταπὸν δὲ χρῆμα λοιδορία; ὡς θυμοδακὴς ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἀμύττον ψυχὴν μᾶλλον, ἢ σιδηρὸς χρῶτα. *Jul. 2. Orat.*

[b] Ζῆλός γὰρ συγγνώμης ἀπεστερημένος ὁ ζῆλος, ἀλλὰ θυμὸς μᾶλλόν ἐστιν, καὶ νοσηρία φιλανθρωπίαν οὐκ ἔχουσα, βασκανία τις εἶναι δοκεῖ. *Chrys.* tom. v. p. 32.

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to reform; for no sore is the easilier cured for being roughly handled, and least of all those in manners and opinion. A soft hand, and a tender heart, and a gentle tongue, are most convenient qualities of a spiritual chirurgeon. But farther to this purpose.

Prov. xv. 1.

7. If we desire to live peaceably with all men, we are to be equal in censuring men's actions, candid in interpreting their meanings, mild in reprehending, and sparing to relate their miscarriages, to derive their actions from the best principles, (from which in the judgment of charity they may be supposed to proceed, as from casual mistake rather than from wilful prejudice, from human infirmity rather than from malicious design,) to construe ambiguous expressions to the most favourable sense they may admit; not to condemn men's practices without distinct knowledge of the case, and examining the reasons, which possibly may absolve or excuse them: to extenuate their acknowledged faults by such circumstances as aptly serve that purpose, and not to exaggerate them by strained consequences, or uncertain conjectures: to rebuke them (if need be) so as they may perceive we sincerely pity their errors, and tender their good, and wish nothing more than their recovery, and do not design to upbraid, deride, or insult over them, being fallen; and finally, not to recount their misdeeds over-frequently, unseasonably, and with complacence. He that thus demeaneth himself, manifestly sheweth himself to prize his neighbour's good will, and to be desirous to continue in amity with him; and assuredly obliges him to be in the same manner affected toward him. But he that is rigidly severe and censorious in his judgments, blaming in them things indifferent, condemning actions allowable, detracting from qualities commendable, deducing men's doings from the worst causes, and imputing them to the worst ends, and representing them under the most odious appellations; that calls all impositions of superiors which he dislikes, tyranny, and all manners of divine worship that suit not to his fancy, superstition, and all pretences to conscience in those that dissent from him, hypocrisy, and all opinions

Prov. xvii. 9.

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different from his, heresy; that is suspicious of ill intention without sufficient ground, and prejudicates men's meanings before he well apprehends them, and captiously perverts sayings capable of good construction; that is curiously inquisitive into his neighbour's life, and gladly observes failings therein, and upon all occasions recites stories to his disgrace and disadvantage; that is immoderately bitter, fierce, and vehement in accusing and inveighing against others, painting such, as he assumes to impugn, with the blackest colours, in the most horrid shape and ugly dress, converting all matter of discourse (though never so unseasonably and impertinently) into declamation, and therein copiously expatiating: in fine, employing his utmost might of wit and eloquence and confidence in rendering that to others as hateful as he signifies they are to himself: such men, what do they else but loudly proclaim that they despise their neighbour's good will, purposely provoke his anger, and defy his utmost enmity? For it is impossible such dealing should not by them, who are therein concerned, be accounted extremely unjust, and to proceed from desperate hatred.

That flies like a vulture to carrion only. *Plut. de Util cap. ex Inim.* Prov. xvii. 9. xxiv. 17.

8. He that would effectually observe this apostolic rule, must be disposed to overlook such lesser faults committed against him, as make no great breach upon his interest or credit, yea to forget or forgive the greatest and most grievous injuries; to excuse the mistakes, and connive at the neglects, and bear patiently the hasty passions of his neighbour, and to embrace readily any seasonable overture, and accept any tolerable conditions of reconcilement [c]. For even in common life that observation of our Saviour most exactly holds, *It is impossible that offences should not come;* the air may sooner become wholly fixed, and the sea continue in a perfect rest, without waves or undulations, than human conversation be altogether free

[c] *Sen. Ben.* vii. 31. Vincit malos pertinax bonitas. Νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν. Rom. xii. 21.

Irascitur aliquis? tu contra beneficiis provoca: cadit statim simultas ab altera parte deserta; nisi par non pugnat: si utrinque certabitur, ille est melior, qui prior pedem retulit; victus est qui vicit. *Sen. de Ira*, ii. 34.

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from occasions of distaste, which he that cannot either prudently dissemble, or patiently digest, must renounce all hopes of living peaceably here. He that like tinder is inflammable by the least spark, and is enraged by every angry word, and resents deeply every petty affront, and cannot endure the memory of a past unkindness should upon any terms be defaced, resolves surely to live in eternal tumult and combustion, to multiply daily upon himself fresh quarrels, and to perpetuate all enmity already begun. Whenas by total passing by those little causes of disgust the present contention is altogether avoided, or instantly appeased, our neighbour's passion suddenly evaporates and consumes itself; no remarkable footsteps of dissension remain; our neighbour, reflecting upon what is past, sees himself obliged by our discreet forbearance, however all possible means are used to prevent trouble and preserve peace. To this purpose, *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression*, saith Solomon: and, *He that covereth a trangression seeketh love*, saith the same wise prince. But farther,

Prov. xix. 11.

Prov. xvii. 9.

9. If we would live peaceably with all men, we must not over highly value ourselves, nor over eagerly pursue our own things. We must not admire our own endowments, nor insist upon our deserts; for this will make us apt to depreciate others, and them to loath us. We must not be over tender of our credit, and covetous of respect; for this will render us apt to take exceptions, and engage us in troublesome competitions for superiority of place, and pre-eminence in the vain opinions of men. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:* And, *Only* (*i. e.* chiefly) *from pride cometh contention*, saith Solomon. We must not be much addicted to our own interests, for this will dispose us to encroach upon the concernments of others, and them to resist our attempts, whence conflict and enmity will necessarily arise. We must not prefer our own judgments, and imperiously obtrude them upon others; nor be pertinacious in persuading them to embrace our private opinions, nor violently urgent to a com-

Prov. xxviii. 25.

Prov. xiii. 10.

pliance with our humour. For these things are intolerably fastidious in conversation, and obnoxious to be charged with usurpation and iniquity; all men naturally challenging to themselves an equal, or at least a proportionable share of reason, together with the free conduct of their lives uncontrollable by private dictates. If therefore we desire to live quietly, and not needlessly to disoblige or displease others, we should be modest in esteeming our own abilities, and moderate in pursuing our own advantages, and in our converse not less complacent to others than we desire they should be to us; and as liberal in allowing leave to dissent from us, as we are bold in taking freedom to abound in our own sense. And if in debate a modest declaration of our opinion, and the reasons inducing us thereto, will not prevail, it behoves us to give over such a successless combat, and to retire into the silent enjoyment of our own thoughts. From not observing which rule, discourse grows into contention, and contention improves into feud and enmity.

10. If we would live peaceably, it concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions either merely vain and frivolous, of little use or concernment; or over nice and subtile, and thence indeterminable by reason; or that are agitated with extraordinary eagerness and heat of passion; or such as are already defined by general consent; or such upon the decision of which the public peace and safety do depend. There are some controversies prickly, like brambles, and apt to scratch those that handle them, but yielding no savoury or wholesome fruit: such as concern the consequences of imaginary suppositions, the state and circumstances of beings to us unknown, the right application of artificial terms, and the like impertinent matters; which serve to no other purpose but the exercise of curious wits, and exciting emulation among them. Others there be concerning matters of more weighty moment, yet having the resolution depending upon secrets unsearchable, or the interpretation of ambiguous words and obscure phrases, or upon some other uncertain conjectures; and are yet rendered more difficult by being

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Non amplius inveniri licet quam quod a Deo discitur. *Tertull. de Anim.* cap. 2.

entangled with inextricable folds of subtilty, nice distinctions, and crafty evasions, devised by the parties engaged in them for the maintenance of their causes respectively; whence it hath happened, though with immense care and diligence of both parts they have been long canvassed, that yet they do, and in all probability will for ever remain undecided. So that now to engage in contest about them, may be reasonably deemed nothing more than a wilful mispense of our time, labour, and good humour, by vainly reciprocating the saw of endless contention. Other questions there be in themselves of more easy resolution, and of considerable importance, which yet by extreme opposition of parties are so clouded and overgrown with insuperable prejudices, that the disputing them is seldom attended with other success, than an inflaming ourselves and others with passion. Others are by small and obscure parties managed against the common consent, and against the positive decrees of the most venerable authorities among men, by ventilating which, as truth is like to gain little, so peace is sure to suffer much. For as it is nowise a safe or advised course (except in case of necessary defence) to subject received opinions to the hazardous trial of a tumultuary conflict, their credit being better upheld by a stately reservedness, than by a popular forwardness of discourse; as buildings stand fastest that are never shaken, and those possessions remain most secure that are never called in question: so, on the other hand, to countenance new and uncouth paradoxes, as it argues too much arrogance and presumption in confronting our single apprehensions against the deliberate sense and suffrage of so many men, yea so many ages of men; and is likely to prove a successless attempt, like swimming against the current, accompanied with much toil and little progress, so it serves no good end, but only foments divisions, and disturbs both our private and the public peace. But most of all we are to be cautelous of meddling with controversies of dangerous consequence, wherein the public weal and quiet are concerned, which bare the roots of sacred

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authority, and prostitute the mysteries of government to vulgar inspection. Such points ought to be subjects of law, not of syllogism, and the errors in them to be corrected by punishment, rather than confuted by argument: neither can it be thought reasonable that the interest of public peace should depend upon the event of private disputation [d]. It concerns us, therefore, if we would live peaceably in such disputable matters, reserving all due reverence to the judgments of the most, the best and wisest persons, to be content in a modest privacy, to enjoy the results of a serious and impartial disquisition, patiently enduring others to dissent from us, and not attempting by needless, fruitless, and endless contentions, to gain others to our persuasions; especially since the truth contended for may not be worth the passion employed upon it, and the benefits of the victory not countervail the prejudices sustained in the combat. For goodness and virtue may often consist with ignorance and error, seldom with strife and discord. And this consideration I shall conclude with those exhortations of St. Paul, Tit. iii. 9. *But foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and law-contests, decline; for they are unprofitable and vain.* And in 2 Ep. to Tim. ii. 23—25. *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they gender strifes; and the servant of the Lord* (that is, a minister of religion) *must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that are* [a] *contrarily disposed.* And in the same chapter, verse 14. *Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers:* of so pernicious consequence did St. Paul esteem unnecessary wrangling and disputing to be. But farther,

[a] Τὰς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους.

11. If we desire to live peaceably, we must restrain our pragmatical curiosity within the bounds of our proper business and concernment, not (being *curiosi in aliena re-*

[d] Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀποροῦντες πότερον δεῖ τοὺς θεοὺς τιμᾶν, καὶ τοὺς γονεῖς ἀγαπᾶν, ἢ . . ὁ, κωλύσιος δίονται· οἱ δὲ πότερον ἡ χιὼν λευκὴ, ἢ ὦ, αἰσθήσεως. *Arist. Top.* i. 8.

SERM. XXIX. *publ.*) invading other men's provinces, and without leave or commission intermeddling with their affairs[e]; not rushing into their closets, prying into their concealed designs, or dictating counsel to them without due invitation thereto; not controlling their actions, nor subjecting their proceedings to our censure, without competent authority. For these courses men usually look upon as rash intrusions, both injurious and reproachful to them, usurping upon that freedom of choice, which all men passionately affect to preserve entire to themselves, and arguing them of weakness and incapacity to manage their own business: neither do men more naturally drive away flies that buz about their ears, and molest them in their employments, than they with disdain repel such immodest and unseasonable meddlers in their affairs. Let no man suffer, saith
1 Pet. iv. 15. St. Peter, *as a busy-body in other men's matters:* intimating, that those who are impertinently inquisitive into other men's matters, make themselves liable to suffer (and that deservedly) for their fond curiosity and bold presumption.
Prov. xxvi. 17. And, *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*, saith Solomon; that is, he catcheth at that which he cannot hold, and vainly aims at that which he cannot effect, and rashly irritates those which will turn upon him and bite him. If, therefore, we would neither molest others, nor be disquieted ourselves, we must be like natural agents, never working aught beyond our proper sphere of activity. But especially, if we desire to live peaceably, we must beware of assuming to ourselves a liberty to censure the designs, decrees, or transactions of public authority, and of saying to our superiors, What doest thou? and much more by querulous murmurings, or clamorous declamations, of bringing envy and odium upon them. Few private men are capable of judging aright concerning those things, as being placed beneath in a valley, and wanting a due pros-

[e] According to St. Paul's advice, 1 Thess. iv. 11. *Strive* (or be ambitious) *to be quiet, and to mind your own business.* (Φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια.)

pect upon the ground and causes of their proceedings, who by reason of their eminent station can see more and farther than they; and therefore are incompetent judges, and unjustly presume to interpose their sentence in such cases. But suppose the actions of superiors notoriously blameable and scandalous, and that by infallible arguments we are persuaded thereof; yet seeing neither the taxing of, nor complaint against them doth in any wise regularly belong to us, nor the discovery of our mind therein can probably be an efficacious means of procuring redress, and immediately tends to diminish the reputation and weaken the affection due to government, and consequently to impair the peaceable estate of things which by them is sustained, we are wholly to abstain from such unwarrantable, unprofitable, and turbulent practices; and with a submiss and discreet silence, passing over the miscarriages of our superiors, to wait patiently upon the providence, and implore the assistance of him, who is the only competent Judge of such, and sovereign Disposer of all things, who hath their hearts in his hands, and fashioneth them as he thinks good. Farther, SERM. XXIX. Prov. xxi. 1. xxxiii. 15.

12. If we would live peaceably with all men, it behoves us not to engage ourselves so deeply in any singular friendship, or in devotion to any one party of men, as to be entirely partial to their interests, and prejudiced in their behalf, without distinct consideration of the truth and equity of their pretences in the particular matters of difference; not to approve, favour, or applaud that which is bad in some; to dislike, discountenance, or disparage that which is good in others: not, out of excessive kindness to some, to give just cause of distaste to others: not, for the sake of a fortuitous agreement in disposition, opinion, interest, or relation, to violate the duties of justice or humanity. For he that upon such terms is a friend to any one man, or party of men, as to be resolved, with an implicit faith, or blind obedience, to maintain whatever he or they shall affirm to be true, and whatever they shall do to be good, doth in a manner undertake enmity against all men beside, and as it

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may happen, doth oblige himself to contradict plain truth, to deviate from the rules of virtue, and to offend Almighty God himself. This unlimited partiality we owe only to truth and goodness, and to God, (the fountain of them,) in no case to swerve from their dictates and prescriptions. He that followed Tiberius Gracchus in his seditious practices, upon the bare account of friendship, and alleged in his excuse, that, if his friend had required it of him, he should as readily have put fire to the Capitol, was much more abominable for his disloyalty to his country, and horrible impiety against God, than commendable for his constant fidelity to his friend. And that soldier which is said to have told Cæsar, (in his first expedition against Rome,) that in obedience to his commands he would not refuse to sheath his sword in the breast of his brother, or in the throat of his aged father, or in the bowels of his pregnant mother, was for his unnatural barbarity rather to be abhorred, than to be esteemed for his loyal affection to his general. And in like manner, he that, to please or gratify the humour of his friend, can be either injurious, or treacherous, or notably discourteous to any man else, is very blameable, and renders himself deservedly odious to all others. Lælius, who incomparably well both understood and practised the rules of friendship, is by Cicero reported to have made this the first and chief law thereof; *Ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rogati: That we neither require of our friends the performance of base and naughty things: nor, being requested of them, perform such ourselves.* And in the heraldry, or comparison of duties, as all others must give place to those of piety, verity, and virtue, so after them the duties of humanity justly challenge the next place of respect, even above those which belong to the highest degree of friendship, (due to our nearest relations, yea to our country itself,) precisely taken, abstracted and distinguished from those of humanity. For the world is in nature the first, the most comprehensive and dearest country of us all; and our general obligations to mankind are more ancient, more fundamental, and more indispensable, than those particular

Cic. in Lælio.

Luc. lib. i.

Prov. xxiv. 24. He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.

Cic. in Lælio.

ones superadded to, or superstructed on them. The peace therefore of the world, and the general welfare of men its citizens, ought to be more dear to us, and the means conducing thereto more carefully regarded by us in our actions, than either the love, favour, or satisfaction of any particular persons is to be valued or pursued. And the not observing this rule may reasonably be esteemed to have a great influence upon the continuance of those implacable feuds and dissensions, wherewith the world is so miserably torn and shattered. Men's being peremptorily resolved to extol, countenance, or excuse promiscuously all the principles and proceedings of the party to which they have addicted themselves, and to see no error, fault, or abuse in them; but by all means to depress, vilify, and condemn (if not to reproach, calumniate, and persecute) the opinions and practices of others, and not to acknowledge in them any thing considerably good or commendable; whence commonly all apprehend their adversaries extremely unjust and disingenuous towards them, and are alienated from all thoughts (or however discouraged from all hopes) of friendly accommodation and reconcilement. But he, that would live peaceably with all men, must be free in his judgment, impartial in his dealing, and ingenuous in his carriage toward all: not θαυμάζων πρόσωπα, admiring or wondering at some men, (as if they were impeccable, or infallible,) nor having the truth in respect of persons, abetting in his friends only what is just and true, and allowing the same in others, but in neither by signal approbation countenancing any thing false or evil; for so demeaning himself, he giveth no man just occasion of displeasure or enmity against him.

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Jude 16.

James ii. 1

13. If we would live peaceably ourselves, we should endeavour to preserve peace, and prevent differences, and reconcile dissensions among others, by doing good offices, and making fair representations of intercurrent passages between them; by concealing causes of future disgust, and removing present misunderstandings, and excusing past mistakes; by allaying their passions, and rightly informing their minds, by friendly intercessions, and pacific

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advices. For the fire that devoureth our neighbour's house threateneth and endangereth ours; and it is hard to approach contention, without being engaged therein. 'Tis not easy to keep ourselves indifferent or neutral; and doing so, we shall in likelihood be maligned and persecuted by both the contending parties. *Blessed are the peace-makers*, saith our Saviour, *for they shall be called the sons of God;* that is, they shall be highly esteemed and reverenced for this divine quality, wherein they so nearly resemble the God of peace, and his blessed Son the great Mediator. But farther, without respect to other recompence, and from the nature of their employment, such are immediately happy, and in this their virtuous practice rewards itself, that by appeasing others' quarrels, they save themselves from trouble, and enjoy themselves that tranquillity which they procure to others. But those informing sycophants, those internuncios of pestilent tales, and incendiaries of discord, that, (from bad nature, or upon base design) by the still breath of clandestine whispers, or by the more violent blasts of impudent calumnies, kindle the flames of dissension, or foment them among others; that, by disseminating infamous rumours, and by malicious suggestions, instil jealousies into, and nourish malevolent surmises in the minds of men, *separating*, as it is in the Proverbs, *between chief friends*, and widening the distance between others: these, I say, from the seeds of variance they scatter among others, reap in the end mischief and disturbance to themselves; nor can expect to enjoy the benefit of that quiet, which they labour to deprive others of. *The beginning of strife*, saith Solomon, *is as when one letteth out water;* and he that, to the intent his neighbour's lands should be overflown with a torrent of dissension, doth unloose the dams, and cut the banks of former friendship, may (if he be wise) expect the merciless flood should at length reach himself, and that his own habitation should be at last surrounded therewith. For when men at length begin to be weary, and to repent of their needless quarrels, and the mischievous consequences attending them, and to be inquisitive into the causes and instruments of their vexation,

Matt. v. 9.

To the counsellors of peace is joy. Prov. xii. 20.

Prov. xvi. 28.

Prov. xvii. 14.

Prov. xxv. 8.

Vid. Prov. xi. 27. He that diligently seeketh good pro-

they will certainly find out, detest, and invert the edge of their displeasure upon these wretched makebates; and so the poison they mingled for others they themselves drink up; the catastrophe of the tragedy (begun by them) is acted upon themselves; they sink down into the pit they made for others, and in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: *Et delator habet quod dedit exitium.*

cureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come upon him.

Lastly, If we would effectually observe this precept, we must readily comply with the innocent customs, and obey the established laws of the places where we live. I say first comply with the customs; which also are in effect inferior laws enacted by the tacit agreement of the generality of men; the non-observation of which is upon many accounts very prejudicial to peaceable life. For to those concerned in it, it will always seem to intimate a squeamish niceness, a froward perverseness, an arrogant self-conceitedness, a manifest despising other men's judgments, and a virtual condemning their practices of fault or folly, and consequently a monopolizing all goodness, and appropriating all wisdom to himself; qualities intolerably odious to men, and productive of enmity. It incenses the people (hugely susceptive of provocation) with a sense of notable injury done, and contempt cast upon it. For the only authority which the commonalty can lay claim to, consists in prescribing rules of decency in language, habit, gesture, ceremony, and other circumstances of action, declared and ratified by ordinary practice; nonconformity to which is by them adjudged a marvellous irregularity, contumacy, and rebellion against the majesty of the people, and is infallibly revenged and punished by them.

There is no preserving peace, nor preventing broils and stirs, but by punctually observing that ordinary rule of equity, that in cases of doubtful debate, and points of controverted practice, the fewest should yield to the most, the weakest bend to the strongest, and that to the greatest number should be allowed at least the greatest appearance of reason. To which purpose we may observe, that the best and wisest men (not to displease those with whom they conversed, as far as their duty to God, and their

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conscience, would permit) have commonly in their manners of life followed not what in their retired judgment they most approved, but what suited to the customs of their times and places, avoiding a morose singularity, as offensive to others, and productive of disquiet to themselves[f]. You know how Cicero censured Cato for endeavouring, against the grain and predominant genius of those times, to reduce things to a strict agreement with his private notions: *Ille optimo animo utens, et summa fide, nocet interdum reipublicæ. Dicit enim tanquam in Platonis* πολιτείᾳ, *non tanquam in Romuli fæce sententiam.* But a more clear and pertinent instance we have in St. Paul, who thus represents his own practice: *I have made myself a servant to all: Unto the Jews I became as a Jew; to them that are without law, as without law: To the weak became I as weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* St. Paul wisely knew, that, by a prudent compliance with men's customs, and condescension to their capacities, he engaged to him, or at least did not alienate from him, their affections; and thereby became more capable of infusing good doctrine into their minds, and promoting their spiritual good. And the same course was generally taken by the primitive Christians, who in all things (not inconsistent with the rules and principles of their religion) did industriously conform their conversation to the usual practices of men; thereby shunning those scandalous imputations of pride and perverseness, which then rendered the Jews so odious to the world, as appears by divers passages in the ancient apologists for Christian religion: particularly Justin Martyr (in his Epistle to Diognetus) hath these words: Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ οὔτε γῇ, οὔτε φωνῇ, οὔτε ἔθεσι διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσὶν ἄνθρώπων· οὔτε γάρ πε πόλεις ἰδίας κατοικοῦσιν, οὔτε διαλέκτῳ τινὶ παρηλλαγμένῃ χρῶνται, οὔτε βίον παράσημον ἀσκοῦσιν—κατοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνικάς τε καὶ βαρβάρους, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐκληρώθη, ἐν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἔθεσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες, &c. *The Christians,*

Epist. ad Att. lib. ii. Ep. i.

1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22. x. 33.

Vid. Acts xxiv.

[f] Id agamus, ut meliorem vitam sequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam: alioqui quos emendari volumus fugamus et a nobis avertimus.

Temperetur vita inter bonos mores et publicos, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 5.

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neither in dwelling, language, or customs, differ from the rest of men; they neither inhabit towns proper to themselves, nor use any peculiar dialect, nor exercise an uncouth manner of living; but, as by chance it is allotted to them, inhabiting cities belonging both to Greeks and Barbarians, comply with the customs of the country. And much more hath he there; and much Tertullian likewise in his Apologetic, to the same purpose. Neither do we find in the life of our Saviour, that exact pattern of wisdom and goodness, that in any thing he did affect to differ from the received customs of his time and country, except such as were grounded upon vain conceits, extremely prejudicial to piety, or directly repugnant thereto.

And I cannot except from this rule the compliance with religious customs used in the worship and service of God: since a wilful discrepancy from them doth much more destroy peace, and kindle the flame of contention, inasmuch as men are apt to apprehend themselves much more slighted and more condemned by a disagreement in those, than in matters of lesser concernment. And it cannot reasonably be imagined, that the God of love and peace, who questionless delights to see men converse in peace and amity, and who therefore in general terms enjoins us to pursue the things that make for peace, (whereof certainly, in reason and to experience, following indifferent and harmless customs, not expressly repugnant to his law, nor to the dictates of natural reason, is one thing, and not the least,) in our addresses to himself (partly designed and mainly serving more strictly to unite, not to dissociate men in affection) should dislike or disapprove the use of this course, so expedient and conducible to peace: especially since he infinitely more regards the substance of the duty, and the devotion of the heart therein, than the manner, or any circumstantial appendages thereof: it is certain however, that St. Paul intimates a wilful departure from ordinary practice in such cases, to proceed from a contentious disposition: *But if any man,* saith he, *have a mind to be contentious,* (so δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι imports,) *we have no such custom, nor the churches of God.*

Rom. xiv. 19.

1 Cor. xi. 16.

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But yet much more is peaceable conversation impeached by disobedience to established laws, those great bulwarks of society, fences of order, and supports of peace: which he that refuses to obey, is so far from living peaceably with all men, that he may reasonably be presumed unwilling to have peace with any man; since in a manner he defies all mankind, vilifies its most solemn judgments, endeavours to dissolve those sacred bands by which its union is contained, and to subvert the only foundations of public tranquillity. He declares himself either to affect an universal tyranny over, or an abhorrency from society with, other men, to be unwilling to live with them upon equal terms, or to submit to any fair arbitration, to desire that strife should be endless, and controversies never decided, who declines the verdict of law, the most solemn issue of deliberate advice, proceeding from the most honourable, most wise, most worthy and select persons, and involving in it the consent of the whole commonwealth. St. Paul, directing that prayers should be made for princes, and those in authority, assigns the reason, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty:* and certainly if we are to pray for, we are also obliged to obey them in order to the same end, which to do is absolutely in our power, and more immediately requisite to that purpose. For as no peace can be preserved without the influence of authority; so no authority can subsist without obedience to its sanctions. He that is desirous to enjoy the privileges of this happy estate of peace, must in reason be content to perform the duties enjoined, and bear the common burdens imposed by those who are the protectors of it.

1 Tim. ii. 2.

Thus, as plainly as I could, have I described what it is to live peaceably, and what the means are that principally conduce thereto: I should now proceed to consider the object of the duty, and the reasons why it respects all men; as also whence it comes, that sometimes we may fail in our endeavour of attaining this desirable condition: and lastly, to propound some inducements persuasive of its practice. But I must not farther encroach on your

patience, and shall therefore reserve these things to the next opportunity.

Now the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

SERMON XXX.

OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

ROM. xii. 18.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

SERM. XXX. I HAVE very lately considered what it is to *live peaceably*, and what are the duties included therein; and what means conduce thereto.

II. I proceed now to consider the object thereof, and why the duty of living peaceably extends to *all men*, that is, why we are bound to bear good-will, and do good offices, and shew civil respects to all men; and to endeavour that all men reciprocally be well-affected toward us. For it might with some colour of reason be objected, and said, Why should I be obliged heartily to love those that desperately hate me; to treat them kindly that use me despitefully; to help them that would hinder me; to relieve them that would plunge me into utter distress; to comfort them that delight in my affliction; to be respective to, and tender of, their reputation, who despise, defame, and reproach me; to be indulgent and favourable to them who are harsh and rigorous in their dealings with me; to spare and pardon them, who with implacable malice persecute me? Why should I seek their friendship, who disdainfully reject mine? why prize their favour, who scorn mine? why strive to please them, who purposely offend me? Or why should I have any regard to men, void of all faith, goodness, or desert? And most

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of all, why should I be bound to maintain amicable correspondence with those, who are professed enemies to piety and virtue, who oppugn truth, and disturb peace, and countenance vice, error, and faction? How can any love, consent of mind, or communion of good offices, intercede between persons so contrarily disposed? I answer, they may, and ought, and that because the obligation to these ordinary performances is not grounded upon any peculiar respects, special qualifications, or singular actions of men, (which are contingent and variable,) but upon the indefectible score of common humanity. We owe them (as the philosopher alleged, when he dispensed his alms to an unworthy person) οὐ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ not to the men, but to human nature resident in them. There be indeed divers other sorts of love, in nature and object more restrained, built upon narrower foundations, and requiring more extraordinary acts of duty and respect, not competent to all men; as a love of friendship, founded upon long acquaintance, suitableness of disposition, and frequent exchanges of mutual kindness; a love of gratitude, due to the reception of valuable benefits; a love of esteem, belonging to persons endued with worth and virtue; a love of relation, resulting from kindred, affinity, neighbourhood, and other common engagements. But the love of benevolence, (which is precedent to these, and more deeply rooted in nature, more ancient, more unconfined, and more immutable,) and the duties mentioned consequent on it, are grounded upon the natural constitution, necessary properties, and unalterable condition of humanity, and are upon several accounts due thereto.

1. Upon account of universal cognation, agreement, and similitude of nature. For οἰκεῖον ἅπας ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον *All men naturally are of kin and friends to each other*, saith Aristotle. *Et fratres etiam vestri sumus jure naturæ matris unius; We are also your brethren in the right of nature, our common mother*, saith Tertullian of old, in the name of the Christians to the Heathens. We are but several streams issuing from one primitive source;

8. Eth. cap. 1.

In Apolog.

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several branches sprouting from the same stock; several stones hewed out of the same quarry: one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction diffused and multiplied. One element affords us matter, and one fire actuates it, kindled at first by the breath of God. One blood flows in all our veins; one nourishment repairs our decayed bodies, and one common air refreshes our languishing spirits[a]. We are cohabitants of the same earth, and fellow-citizens of the same great commonwealth; *Unam remp. omnium agnoscimus mundum*, said the forementioned apologist for Christianity. We were all fashioned according to the same original idea, (resembling God our common Father,) all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; all conspire in the essential and more notable ingredients of our constitution; and are only distinguished by some accidental, inconsiderable circumstances of age, place, colour, stature, fortune, and the like; in which we differ as much from ourselves in successions of time. So that what Aristotle said of a friend is applicable to every man; every man is ἄλλος αὐτὸς, *another ourself*[b]: and he that hates another, detests his own most lively picture; he that harms another, injures his own nature; he that denies relief to another, starves a member of his own body, and withers a branch of his own tree. *The merciful man doeth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.* Neither can any personal demerit of vicious habit, erroneous opinion, enormous practice, or signal discourtesy towards us, dissolve these bands: for as no unkindness of a brother can wholly rescind that relation, or disoblige us from the duties annexed thereto; so neither upon the faults or in-

Acts xvii. 26.

Prov. xi. 17.

See Deut. xxv. 3.—Lest thy brother seem vile unto thee.

[a] Ἀνδράποδον ἐκ ἀνέξῃ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τοῦ σαυτοῦ ὃς ἔχει τὸν Δία πρόγονον· ὥσπερ υἱὸς ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν σπερμάτων γέγονε, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἄνωθεν καταξολῆς, &c. *Epict.* i. 13.

Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debeatur. *Aug. Ep.* 121. *ad Probam.*

[b] Nihil est enim unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus, &c. *Cic. de Legib.* i. p. 161.

juries of any man can we ground a total dispensation from the offices of humanity, especially if the injuries be not irreparable, nor the faults incurable.

2. We are indispensably obliged to these duties, because the best of our natural inclinations prompt us to the performance of them; especially those of pity and benignity, which are manifestly discernible in all, but most powerful and vigorous in the best natures; and which, questionless, by the most wise and good Author of our beings were implanted therein both as monitors to direct, and as spurs to incite us to the performance of our duty. For the same bowels, that, in our want of necessary sustenance, do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide against it, do in like manner grievously resent the distresses of another, and thereby admonish us of our duty, and provoke us to relieve them. Even the stories of calamities, that in ages long since past have happened to persons nowise related to us, yea, the fabulous reports of tragical events, do (even against the bent of our wills, and all resistance of reason) melt our hearts with compassion, and draw tears from our eyes; and thereby evidently signify that general sympathy which naturally intercedes between all men, since we can neither see, nor hear of, nor imagine another's grief, without being afflicted ourselves. Antipathies may be natural to wild beasts; but to rational creatures they are wholly unnatural. And on the other side, as nature to eating and drinking, and such acts requisite to the preservation of our life, hath adjoined a sensible pleasure and satisfaction, enticing us to, and encouraging us in the performance of them; so, and doubtless to the same end, hath she made relieving the necessities of others, and doing good offices to them, to be accompanied with a very contentful and delicious relish to the mind of the doer. Epicurus, that great master of pleasure, did himself confess, that to bestow benefits was not only more brave, but more pleasant, than to receive them; (Επίκουρος, saith [c] Plutarch, τοῦ εὖ πάσ-

—hæc nostri pars optima sensus, —mutuus ut nos affectus petere auxilium, et præstare juberet. *Juven. Sat.* 15.

[c] De Philos. convictu cum Princip. Εὐφραίνει τὸ συνεργητικὸν. *M. Ant.*

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χειν, τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναι φησί.) And, certainly, no kind of actions a man can perform are attended with a more pure, more perfect, more savoury delight, than those of beneficence are. Since nature therefore hath made our neighbour's misery our pain, and his content our pleasure; since with indissoluble bands of mutual sympathy she hath concatenated our fortunes and affections together; since by the discipline of our sense she instructs us, and by the importunity thereof solicits us to the observance of our duty, let us follow her wise directions, and conspire with her kindly motions; let us not stifle or weaken by disuse, or contrary practice, but by conformable action cherish and confirm the good inclinations of nature.

3. We are obliged to these duties upon account of common equity. We have all (the most sour and stoical of us all) implanted in us a natural ambition, and a desire (which we can by no means eradicate) of being beloved and respected by all; and are disposed in our need to demand assistance, commiseration of our misfortunes, and relief in our distress, of all that are in capacity to afford them; and are apt to be vehemently displeased, to think ourselves hardly dealt with, and to complain of cruelty and inhumanity in those that refuse them to us: and therefore in all reason and equity we should readily pay the same love, respect, aid, and comfort to others, which we expect from others; for, *Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit;* nothing is more unreasonable, or unequal, than to require from others those good turns, which upon like occasion we are unwilling to render to others.

4. We are obliged to those duties of humanity, upon account of common interest, benefit, and advantage. The welfare and safety, the honour and reputation, the pleasure and quiet of our lives are concerned in our maintaining a loving correspondence with all men. For so uncertain is our condition, so obnoxious are we to manifold necessities, that there is no man whose good-will we may not need, whose good word may not stand us in stead,

whose helpful endeavour may not sometimes oblige us. The great Pompey, the glorious triumpher over nations, and admired darling of fortune, was beholden at last to a slave for the composing his ashes, and celebrating his funeral obsequies. The honour of the greatest men depends on the estimation of the least; and the good-will of the meanest peasant is a brighter ornament to the fortune, a greater accession to the grandeur of a prince, than the most radiant gem in his royal diadem. However, the spite and enmity of one (and him the most weak otherwise and contemptible) person may happen to spoil the content of our whole life, and deprive us of the most comfortable enjoyments thereof; may divert our thoughts from our delightful employments to a solicitous care of self-preservation and defence; may discompose our minds with vexatious passions; may by false reports, odious suggestions, and slanderous defamations, blast our credit, raise a storm of general hatred, and conjure up thousands of enemies against us; may by insidious practices supplant and undermine us, prejudice our welfare, endanger our estate, and involve us in a bottomless gulph of trouble: it is but reasonable, therefore, if we desire to live securely, comfortably, and quietly, that by all honest means we should endeavour to purchase the good-will of all men, and provoke no man's enmity needlessly; since any man's love may be useful, and every man's hatred is dangerous.

5. We are obliged to these duties by a tacit compact and fundamental constitution of mankind, in pursuance of those principal designs, for which men were incorporated, and are still contained in civil society. For to this purpose do men congregate, cohabit, and combine themselves in sociable communion, that thereby they may enjoy a delightful conversation, void of fear, free from suspicion, and free from danger; promote mutual advantage and satisfaction; be helpful and beneficial each to other: abstracting from which commodities, the retirements of a cloister, or the solitudes of a desert, the life of a recluse, or of a wild beast, would perhaps be more desirable than these of gregarious converse: for as men, being pleased and well-affected to

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each other, are the most obliging friends, and pleasant companions; so being enraged, they are the most mischievous and dangerous neighbours, the most fierce and savage enemies. By neglecting, therefore, or contravening these duties of humanity, we frustrate the main ends of society, disappoint the expectations of each other, subvert the grounds of ordinary civility, and in the commonwealth deal as unpolitickly, as the members in the body should act unnaturally, in subtracting mutual assistance, or harming each other; as if the eye should deny to the hands the direction of sight, and the hands in revenge should pluck out the eyes.

6. We are by observing these rules to oblige and render men well-affected to us, because being upon such terms with men conduceth to our living (not only delightfully and quietly, but) honestly and religiously in this world. How peace and edification, spiritual comfort and temporal quiet do concur and co-operate, we see intimated Acts ix. 31. *Then had the churches peace throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.* St. Paul advised the Christians of his time, liable to persecution, *to make prayers for all men,* (and *especially for those in eminent power,*) *that they might lead* [d] *a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;* to pray for them, that is, to pray that they might be so disposed, as not to molest, interrupt, or discourage them in the exercise of virtue, and practice of piety. For these, by a tranquillity of mind, a sedateness of affections, a competency of rest, and leisure, and retirement, a freedom from amazing fear, distracting care, and painful sense, are greatly advanced; of which advantages by contentious broils and enmities we are deprived, and encumbered with the contrary impediments. They breed thorny anxieties, and by them choke the seeds of good intention: they raise dusky fumes of melancholy, by them intercepting the beams of spiritual light, and stifling the flames of

1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

[d] Ἥρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον, a retired and quiet life.

devout affection. By them our thoughts are affixed upon the basest, and taken off from the most excellent objects; our fancies are disordered by turbulent animosities; our time is spent, and our endeavour taken up in the most ungrateful and unprofitable employments, of defeating the attempts, resisting the assaults, disproving the calumnies, countermining the plots of adversaries; they bring us upon the stage against our will, and make us act parts in tragedies, neither becoming, nor delighting us. They disturb often our natural rest, and hinder us in the dispatch of our ordinary business; and much more impede the steadiness of our devotion, and obstruct the course of religious practice. They tempt us also to omissions of our duty, to unseemly behaviour, and to the commissions of grievous sin; to harsh censure, envious detraction, unwarrantable revenge, repining at the good successes, and delighting in the misfortunes of others. Many examples occur in history, like those of Hanno the Carthaginian, and Quint. Metellus, (Pompey's antagonist,) who, in pursuance of some private grudges, have not only betrayed their own interests, and sullied their own reputations, but notably disserved and damnified the public weal of their country: and so will our being engaged in enmity with men cause us to neglect, if not to contradict, our dearest concernments; whence we should carefully avoid the occasions thereof, and by an innocent and beneficent conversation oblige men to a friendly correspondence with us. SERM. XXX.

7. We are obliged to perform these duties of humanity, because by so doing we become more capable of promoting goodness in others, and so fulfilling the highest duties of Christian charity; of successfully advising and admonishing others; of instructing their ignorance, and convincing their mistakes; of removing their prejudices, and satisfying their scruples; of reclaiming them from vice, error, faction; and reconciling them to virtue, truth, and peace. For by no force of reason, or stratagem of wit, are men so easily subdued, by no bait so throughly allured and caught, as by real courtesy, gentleness, and affa-

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bility; as on the other side, by a sour and peevish humour, supercilious looks, bitter language, and harsh dealing, men are rendered indocile and intractable, averse from better instruction, obstinate in their ways, and pertinacious in their conceits. Easily do men swallow the pill gilded with fair carriage, and sweetened by kind speech; readily do they afford a favourable ear to the advice seeming to proceed from good-will, and a tender care of their good: but the physic of wholesome admonition being steeped in the vinegar of reproach, and tempered with the gall of passion, becomes distasteful and loathsome to the patient: neither will men willingly listen to the reasonings of those, whom they apprehend disaffected to their persons, and more desirous to wound their reputations, than to cure their distempers. The slightest argument, the most simple and unpolished oration, issuing from the mouth of a friend, is wonderfully more prevalent, than the strongest demonstration, than the most powerful eloquence of an enemy. For obliging usage and courteous speech unlock the affections, and by them insinuate into the reason of men: but surly deportment and froward expressions slam up the attention with prejudice, and interclude all avenues to the understanding. An illustration of which discourse we have from comparing the different practice of the Jews, and the ancient Christians, with the contrary successes thereof. The Jews, by their seditious and turbulent practices, by their insolent contempt, and implacable hatred of others; (for you know what Tacitus saith of them: *Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium;*) by their perverse and unsociable humours, declining all intercourse, and refusing ordinary offices of humanity (so much as to shew the way, or to direct the thirsty traveller to the fountain) to any not of their own sect, did procure an odium, scorn, and infamy upon their religion, rendered all men averse from inquiring into, or entertaining any good opinion thereof, and so very little enlarged its bounds, and gained few proselytes thereto. But the Christians, by a mild, patient, and peaceable behaviour; by obedience to laws,

Hist. lib. v.

and compliance with harmless customs; by perfect innocence, and abstinence from doing injury; by paying due respects, and performing civil offices and demonstrations of benevolence; by loving conversation, and friendly commerce with all, commended their doctrine to the regard of men[e]: and by this only piece of rhetoric (without terror of arms, or countenance of power, or plausibility of discourse, or promise of temporal reward) subdued the faith of men, and persuaded a great part of the world to embrace their excellent profession. SERM. XXX.

"We converse with you like men, we use the same "diet, habit, and necessary furniture: we have recourse "to your tribunals; we frequent your markets, your fairs, "your shops, your stalls, your shambles, your baths: we "cohabit, we sail, we war, we till, we trade, we maintain all manner of commerce with you;" saith the Christian apologist to the Pagans, in behalf of the ancient Christians. Which kind of practice they derived not only from the sweet temper and noble genius of their religion, but from the express institution of the first teachers thereof, and from their exemplary practice therein. For both by doctrine did the Apostles exhort, and by their example incite them to adorn the Gospel, and render the discipline of Christ amiable by their meek, gentle, compliant, and inoffensive conversation; and thereby to allure others to a willing entertainment thereof. To this purpose are those exhortations, Phil. iv. 5. *Let your moderation* (τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν, *your equity*, or *gentleness*) *be known to all men:* and, 1 Thess. v. 14.—*Comfort the* [a] *afflicted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. Be ye all careful not to render evil for evil, but always pursue goodness toward each other, and toward all:* and, Gal. vi. 10. *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men:* and, Tit. iii. 1, 2. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to be ready to every good work, to reproach no man, not to* Tertull Apol.

[a] Τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους.

[e] Thus the ancient Christians: but when religion declined, dissension and ill-will did grow; so that the heathen historian (*Am. Mar.* lib. xxii.) could say of Julian: *Nullas infestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi feralis plerique Christianorum, experius.*

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be contentious, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men: and, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. *The minister of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;* (or those that are otherwise disposed, τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους:) *if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth:* where gentleness toward all, and meekness toward adversaries, are oppositely conjoined, with aptness to teach and instruct; the one qualification so effectually predisposing to the other: and it is beside intimated, that gentle and meek treatment are suitable instruments, ordinarily employed by God to convert men from error to truth.

8. We are bound hereto in compliance and conformity to the best patterns; God, Christ, the Apostles, the primitive saints. This illustrious doctor of Christian religion, St. Paul, did not fail to second this his doctrine with his own example: for, *Give none offence,* saith he, *neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles; nor to the church of God; even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Please all men in all things:* what could St. Paul say, or what do more? And again, *For though,* saith he, *I be free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might save some.* See how far this charitable design of doing good to others transported him: he parted with his own freedom, that he might redeem them from the slavery of a wicked life; he denied his own present satisfaction, that he might procure them a lasting content; he despised his own profit, that he might promote their spiritual advantage; he prostituted his own reputation, that he might advance them to a condition of true glory. He underwent grievous afflictions for their comfort, sustained restless pains for their ease, and hazarded his own safety for their salvation. He condescended to their infirmities, suited his demeanour to their tempers, complied with their various humours,

1 Cor. x. 32, 33.

1 Cor. ix. 19, &c.

and contrary customs: he differed from himself, that he might agree with them, and transformed himself into all shapes, that he might convert them into what they should be, reform their manners, and translate them into a happy estate. But above all is the practice of our Lord himself most remarkable to this purpose; and discovers plainly to him that observes, an universally large and unrestrained philanthropy. For having from a wonderful conspiracy of kindness and good-will (between him and his eternal Father) toward the world of men, descended willingly from the throne of his celestial majesty, and enveloped his divine glory in a cloud of mortal frailty, and *that*, as the Apostle saith, *he might reconcile all things in heaven and earth*, conjoin God and man by a nearer alliance, and unite men together by the more sacred bands of common relation to himself: having assumed not only the outward shape and corporeal resemblance of man, but the inward frame and real passions of human souls; he disdained not accordingly to obey the laws, to follow the inclinations, to observe the duties of the best and most perfect humanity; with an equal and impartial bounty imparting free admittance, familiar converse, friendly aid and succour unto all, even the worst of men in all appearance, (and that so far, that some rigorous censurers thence presumed to tax him as *a glutton, and a good-fellow, a friend to publicans and sinners*,) distributing liberally to all the incomparable benefits of his heavenly doctrine, of his holy example, of his miraculous power; instructing the ignorances, detecting the errors, dispossessing the devils; sustaining the weaknesses, overlooking the injuries, comforting the afflictions, supplying the necessities, healing the diseases, and remedying all the miseries of all, that did not wilfully reject their own welfare: *He went about*, saith St. Peter in the Acts, *doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil*: and, *He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people*, saith St. Matthew's Gospel. He despised not the meanest, either

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Coloss. i. 20.

Matt. xi. 19.

Acts x. 38.

Matt. ix. 35.

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in outward estate, or spiritual improvement. He invited all unto him, repelled or discouraged none; nor refused to any that came unto him his counsel or his help. He was averse from no man's society, (and if in any degree from any, chiefly from those, who confidently pretended to extraordinary sanctity, and proudly contemned others.) Meek and gentle he was, mild and patient; courteous and benign; lowly and condescensive; tender and compassionate in his conversation unto all. And for a complement of his transcendent charity, and for an enforcement unto ours, he laid down his life for us all, as a common price to purchase remission of sins; a general ransom to redeem the human creation from the captivity of hell and slavery of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; demolishing by his pacific death all partition walls, and laying open all enclosures of the divine favour; reconciling God to man, and combining man to himself by the fresh cement of his precious blood: so that now, not only as fellow-creatures, but (which is exceedingly more) as partakers of the same common redemption, as objects of the same mercy, as obliged in the same common debt, and as capable of the same eternal happiness, by new and firmer engagements we are bound to all mutual kindness and benevolence toward all. For, *Destroy not*, saith St. Paul, (and by like reason I may say, harm not, vex not, be not unkind to) *him, for whom Christ died.*

Luke xviii. 9.

Rom. viii. 32.

Rom. xiv. 15.

Nay, farther, we have the example of Almighty God himself directing, and by our Saviour's express admonition obliging us to this universal beneficence, compassion, and patience towards all: who by express testimony of sacred writ, and by palpable signs of continual experience, declareth himself to be a lover of mankind; to be good to all, and tenderly merciful over all his works; not to afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; to compassionate the miseries, and supply the needs, and relieve the distresses, to desire the salvation, and to delight in the happiness of men: who with an indifferent, unlimited munificence dispenses his blessings, extends his watchful

Tit. iii. 4. Psal. cxlv. 9.

providence, and imparts his loving care unto all; causing his sun with comfortable beams to shine, and the refreshing showers to descend, the earth to yield her pleasant fruits, the temperate seasons to recur, and all the elements to minister succour, joy, and satisfaction, even to the most impious and ungrateful toward him: who with immense clemency and long-sufferance overlooks the sacrilegious affronts offered daily to his majesty, the outrageous violations of his laws, and the contemptuous neglects of his unexpressible goodness: who patiently waits for the repentance, and incessantly solicits the reconcilement, courts the amity, and in a manner begs the good-will of his most deadly enemies; whom he hath always in his hand, and can crush to nothing at his pleasure. For, *We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God by us did entreat you: We beseech you in Christ's behalf; be reconciled to God*, saith St. Paul.

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Vid. Clement. Epist. ad Cor. pag. 27.

2 Cor. v. 20.

Since therefore, upon account of natural consanguinity, of our best inclinations, of common equity, and general advantage, and an implicit compact between men; of securing our, and promoting others' virtue and piety; from the exhortations of Scripture mentioned, and many more tending to the same purpose; from the example of the ancient Christians, the leaders and champions of our religion, of the Apostles, the masters and patriarchs thereof, of our blessed Redeemer, and of Almighty God himself, we are obliged to this universal benevolence and beneficence toward all; no misapprehensions of judgment, no miscarriages in practice, no ill dispositions of soul, no demerits in himself, no discourtesies toward us, ought wholly to alienate our affections from, or to avert us from doing good, or to incline us to render evil for evil unto any person: especially considering, that the omissions of others cannot excuse us from the performance of our duty; that no man is to be presumed incorrigible, nor (like the lapsed angels) concluded in desperate impenitence; and that our loving and gentle demeanour toward them may be instrumental to their amendment, and the contrary may contribute to their progress and continuance in offences;

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that God hath promised to us a reward of our patience, and hath reserved to them a season of judgment and punishment, if they persist obstinate in their disorderly courses; that to avenge their trespasses belongs not to us, but to Almighty God, who is more nearly concerned in, and more injured by them, and is yet content to endure them, to prolong their lives, to continue his benefits to them, and to expect their conversion: that our differing from them is not to be attributed to ourselves, but wholly, or chiefly, to the goodness of God; that we always were, are, and shall be liable to the same errors, vices, and misdemeanours: that, lastly, the faults and follies of others, like the maims of body, distempers of soul, or crosses of fortune, (being their own greatest unhappinesses,) require rather our pity than our hatred, to be eased by our help than aggravated by our unkindness. 'Tis too scant therefore and narrow a charity that is limited by correspondence of courtesy, or by the personal merits of others. We are bound to live peaceably with, that is, to be innocent, beneficial, respective to all, and to seek the reciprocal good-will, love, and amity of all. But I have insisted too long upon this particular, concerning the object of this duty, and its extension.

III. I proceed briefly to consider whence it comes, that, (as I before observed was intimated in these words, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,*) though we do our parts, and perform carefully the duties incumbent on us, though we bear good-will, and do good offices, and yield due respects, and abstain from all not only injurious, but rigorous dealings toward all; though we revile none, nor censure harshly, nor presumptuously intermeddle with others' affairs; though we obey laws, and comply with received customs, and avoid all occasions of contention; though our tempers be meek, our principles peaceable, and our conversations inoffensive, we may yet prove successless in our endeavours to live peaceably, and may be hated, harmed, and disquieted in our course of life. That it so happens, we find by plain experience, and manifold example. For *Moses, the meekest man upon earth,* and

commended beside by all circumstances of divine favour and human worth, was yet often envied, impugned, and molested by those, whom by all manner of benefits he had most highly obliged. And we find David frequently complaining, that by those, whose good-will, by performing all offices of friendly kindness and brotherly affection, he had studiously laboured to deserve, whose maladies and calamities he had not only tenderly commiserated, but had prayed and humbled his soul with fasting for their recovery and deliverance from them, was yet recompensed by their treacherous devices against his safety, by grievous reproaches, and scornful insultings over him in his affliction; as we see at large in Psalms xxxv. and lxix. And in Psalm cxx. he thus lamentably bemoans his condition: *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar: My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace: I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.* And our blessed Saviour himself, though in the whole tenor of his life he demonstrated an incomparable meekness and sweetness of disposition, and exercised continually all manner of kindness and beneficence toward all men, was notwithstanding loaded with all kinds of injuries and contumelies, was bitterly hated, ignominiously disgraced, and maliciously persecuted unto death. And the same lot befel his faithful disciples, that although their design was benign and charitable, their carriage blameless and obliging toward all, they were yet pursued constantly both by the outrageous clamours of the people, and cruel usages from those in eminent power. Now though it seem strange and almost incredible, that they who are truly friends to all, and are ready to do to all what good they can; who willingly displease none, but industriously strive to acquire (not with glozing shews of popularity, but by real expressions of kindness) the good-will and favour of all, should yet be maligned, or molested by any; yet seeing it so happens, if we inquire into the reason, we shall find this miracle in morality to proceed (to omit the neglect of the duties mentioned in our former discourse) chiefly from the exceeding

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Vid. Ps. lv. 10.

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variety, difference, and contrariety of men's dispositions, joined with the morosity, aptness to mistake, envy, or unreasonable perverseness of some; which necessarily render the means of attaining all men's good-will insufficient, and the endeavours unsuccessful. For men seeing by several lights, relishing with diversely disposed palates, and measuring things by different standards, we can hardly do or say any thing, which, if approved and applauded by some, will not be disliked and blamed by others; if it advance us in the opinion of some, will not as much depress us in the judgment of others; so that in this irreconcileable diversity and inconsistency of men's apprehensions, it is impossible not to displease many; especially since some men, either by their natural temper, or from the influence of some sour principles they have imbibed, are so morose, rigid, and self-willed; so impatient of all contradiction to, or discrepancy from their sentiments, that they cannot endure any to dissent in judgment, or vary in practice from them, without incurring their heavy disdain and censure. And, which makes the matter more desperate and remediless, such men commonly being least able either to manage their reason or to command their passion, as guided wholly by certain blind impulses of fancy, or groundless prejudices of conceit, or by a partial admiration of some men's persons, examples, and authorities, are usually most resolute and peremptory in their courses, and thence hardly capable of any change, mitigation, or amendment. Of which sort there being divers engaged in several ways, it is impossible to please some without disgusting the other; and difficult altogether to approach any of these wasps without being stung or vexed by them. Some also are so apt to misunderstand men's meanings, to miscontrue their words, and to make ill descants upon, or draw bad consequences from their actions, that it is not possible to prevent their entertaining ill-favoured prejudices against even those that are heartily their friends, and wish them the best. To others the good and prosperous estate of their neighbour, that he flourishes in wealth, power, or reputation, is ground suffi-

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cient of hatred and enmity against him: for so we see that Cain hated his innocent brother Abel, because his brother's works were more righteous, and his sacrifices better accepted, than his own; that Joseph's brethren were mortally offended at him, because his father especially loved and delighted in him; that Saul was enraged against David, because his gallant deeds were celebrated with due praises and joyful acclamations of the people; and that the Babylonian princes upon no other score maligned Daniel, but because he enjoyed the favour of the king, and a dignity answerable to his deserts. And who, that loves his own welfare, can possibly avoid such enmities as these? But the fatal rock, upon which peaceable designs are most inevitably split, and which by no prudent steering our course can sometimes be evaded, is the unreasonable perverseness of men's pretences, who sometimes will upon no terms be friends with us, or allow us their good-will, but upon condition of concurring with them in dishonest and unwarrantable practices; of omitting some duties, to which by the express command of God, or evident dictates of right reason, we are obliged, or performing some action repugnant to those indispensable rules. But though peace with men is highly valuable, and possessing their good-will in worth not inferior to any other indifferent accommodation of life, yet are these nothing comparable to the favour of God, or the internal satisfaction of conscience; nor, though we were assured thereby to gain the entire love and favour of all men living, are we to purchase them at so dear a rate, as with the loss of these. We must not, to please or gratify men, commit any thing prohibited, or omit any thing enjoined by God, the least glimpse of whose favourable aspect is infinitely more to be prized, than the most intimate friendship of the mightiest monarchs upon earth; and the least spark of whose indignation is more to be dreaded, than the extremest displeasure of the whole world. In case of such competition, we must resolve with St. Paul, *Do I yet* [a] *conciliate God, or do I endeavour to soothe men? For if I yet soothed* (or flattered) *men*, (so you know ἀρέσκειν signi-

Gal. i. 10.

[a] Πείθω.

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fies,) *I were not the servant of Christ.* Nor are we, that we may satisfy any man's pleasure, to contravene the dictates of reason, (that subordinate guide of our actions,) to do any dishonourable or uncomely action, unworthy of a man, misbeseeming our education, or incongruous to our station in human society, so as to make ourselves worthily despicable to the most by contenting some: nor are we bound always to desert our own considerable interest, or betray our just liberty, that we may avoid the enmity of such as would violently or fraudulently encroach upon them. Nor are we in the administration of justice, distribution of rewards, or arbitration of controversies, to respect the particular favour of any, but the merits only of the cause, or the worth of the persons concerned. Nor are we by feeding men's distempered humours, or gratifying their abused fancies, to prejudice or neglect their real good; to encourage them in bad practices, to foment their irregular passions, to applaud their unjust or uncharitable censures, or to puff up their minds with vain conceit by servile flattery: but rather, like faithful physicians, to administer wholesome, though unsavoury advice; to reveal to them their mistakes, to check their intended progress in bad courses, to reprove their faults seasonably, and when it may probably do them good, though possibly thereby we may provoke their anger and procure their ill-will, and, as St. Paul saith, become their enemies, for telling them the truth. Nor are we ever explicitly to assent to falsehoods, (so apprehended by us,) to belie our consciences, or contradict our real judgments; (though we may sometimes for peace sake prudently conceal them;) nor to deny the truth our defence and patronage, when in order to some good purpose it needs and requires them, though thereby we may incur the dislike, and forfeit the good-will of some men. Nor are we by entertaining any extraordinary friendship, intimate familiarity, or frequent converse with persons notoriously dissolute in their manners, disorderly in their behaviour, or erroneous in weighty points of opinion, to countenance their misdemeanours, dishonour our profession,

Gal. vi. 16.

render ourselves justly suspected, run the hazard of contagion, or hinder their reformation. And especially we are warily to decline the particular acquaintance of men of contentious dispositions, mischievous principles, and factious designs; a bare keeping company with whom looks like a conspiracy, an approving or abetting their proceedings; the refusing any encouragement, signification of esteem, or vouchsafing any peculiar respect to such, we owe to the honour of virtue, which they disgrace, to the love of truth, which they oppugn, to the peace of the world, which they disturb, and to the general good of mankind, which they impeach. And so St. Paul warns us not to *mingle* or consort, not to *diet* or *common* (μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι, and μὴ συνεσθίειν) with men of a dissolute and disorderly conversation: and, to *mark them which cause seditions and scandals, contrary to Christian doctrine, and to shun or decline them,* (ἐκκλίνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν,) and to repudiate, deprecate the familiarity of heretics (αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον παραιτεῖσθαι). And St. John forbids us to *wish joy*, or to allow the ordinary respects of civil salutation to apostates and impostors; *lest* (by such demonstration of favour) *we communicate with them in their wicked works.* None of which precepts are intended to interdict to us, or to disoblige us from bearing real goodwill, or dispensing needful benefits to any, but to deter us from yielding any signal countenance to vice and impiety; and to excite us to declare such dislike and detestation of those heinous enormities, as may confer to the reclaiming of these, and prevent the seduction of others. So St. Paul expressly: *But if any man obeyeth not our injunction by epistle, do not consort with him, that he may by shame be reclaimed* (ἵνα ἐντραπῇ): and, *Account him not an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.* Nor ought, lastly, the love of peace, and desire of friendly correspondence with any men, avert us from an honest zeal (proportionable to our abilities and opportunities) of promoting the concernments of truth and goodness, though against powerful and dangerous opposition; I say an honest zeal, meaning thereby not that blind, heady passion, or inflammation of spirit, transport-

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1 Cor. v. 11. Ἀτάκτως περιπ. Rom. xvi. 17. Tit. iii. 10.

2 Joh. 10.

2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

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ing men beyond the bounds of reason and discretion, upon some superficially plausible pretences, to violent and irregular practices; but a considerate and steady resolution of mind, effectually animating a man by warrantable and decent means vigorously to prosecute commendable designs; like that St. Jude mentions, of *striving earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.* For this zeal may be very consistent with, yea, greatly conducible to, the designs of peace. And 'tis not a drowsiness, a slack remissness, a heartless diffidence, or a cowardly flinching from the face of danger and opposition, we discourse about, or plead for; but a wise and wary declining the occasions of needless and unprofitable disturbance to ourselves and others.

Jude 3.

To conclude this point, (which, if time would have permitted, I should have handled more fully and distinctly:) though to preserve peace, and purchase the good-will of men, we may and ought to quit much of our private interest and satisfaction, yet ought we not to sacrifice to them what is not our own, nor committed absolutely to our disposal, and which in value incomparably transcends them, the maintenance of truth, the advancement of justice, the practice of virtue, the quiet of our conscience, the favour of Almighty God. And if, for being dutiful to God, and faithful to ourselves, in these particulars, any men will hate, vex, and despite us; frustrate our desires, and defeat our purposes of living peaceably with all men in this world; we may comfort ourselves in the enjoyment of eternal peace and satisfaction of mind, in the assurance of the divine favour, in the hopes of eternal rest and tranquillity in the world to come.

Now, briefly to induce us to the practice of this duty of living peaceably, we may consider,

Ps. cxxxiii. 1.

1. *How good and pleasant a thing it is,* as David saith, *for brethren* (and so we are all at least by nature) *to live together in unity.* How that, as Solomon saith, *Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.* How delicious that conversation

Prov. xvii. 1.

is, which is accompanied with a mutual confidence, free- SERM. XXX.
dom, courtesy, and complacence: how calm the mind, how composed the affections, how serene the countenance, how melodious the voice, how sweet the sleep, how contentful the whole life is of him, that neither deviseth mischief against others, nor suspects any to be contrived against himself; and contrariwise, how ingrateful and loathsome a thing it is to abide in a state of enmity, wrath, dissension; having the thoughts distracted with solicitous care, anxious suspicion, envious regret; the heart boiling with choler, the face overclouded with discontent, the tongue jarring and out of tune, the ears filled with discordant noises of contradiction, clamour, and reproach: the whole frame of body and soul distempered and disturbed with the worst of passions. How much more comfortable it is to walk in smooth and even paths, than to wander in rugged ways overgrown with briars, obstructed with rubs, and beset with snares; to sail steadily in a quiet, than to be tossed in a tempestuous sea, to behold the lovely face of heaven smiling with a cheerful serenity, than to see it frowning with clouds, or raging with storms; to hear harmonious consents, than dissonant wranglings; to see objects correspondent in graceful symmetry, than lying disorderly in confused heaps; to be in health, and have the natural humours consent in moderate temper, than (as it happens in diseases) agitated with tumultuous commotions: how all senses and faculties of man unanimously rejoice in those emblems of peace, order, harmony, and proportion; yea, how nature universally delights in a quiet stability, or undisturbed progress of motion; the beauty, strength, and vigour of every thing requires a concurrence of force, co-operation, and contribution of help; all things thrive and flourish by communicating reciprocal aid, and the world subsists by a friendly conspiracy of its parts; and especially that political society of men chiefly aims at peace as its end, depends on it as its cause, relies on it as its support. How much a peaceful state resembles heaven, into which neither *complaint*, *pain*, nor *clamour* (οὔτε πένθος, οὔτε πόνος, οὔτε Rev. xxi.

Vid. Clem. ad Cor. p. 27, &c.

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κραυγή, as it is in the Apocalypse) do ever enter; but blessed souls converse together in perfect love, and in perpetual concord: and how a condition of enmity represents the state of hell, that black and dismal region of dark hatred, fiery wrath, and horrible tumult. How like a paradise the world would be, flourishing in joy and rest, if men would cheerfully conspire in affection, and helpfully contribute to each other's content: and how like a savage wilderness now it is, when, like wild beasts, they vex and persecute, worry and devour each other. How not only philosophy hath placed the supreme pitch of happiness in a calmness of mind, and tranquillity of life, void of care and trouble, of irregular passions and perturbations; but that holy Scripture itself in that one term of peace most usually comprehends all joy and content, all felicity and prosperity: so that the heavenly consort of angels, when they agree most highly to bless, and to wish the greatest happiness to mankind, could not better express their sense, than by saying,

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. Prov. xv. 17.

Ἀταραξία.

Luke ii. 14. *Be on earth peace, and good-will among men.*

2. That as nothing is more sweet and delightful, so nothing more comely and agreeable to human nature than peaceable living, it being, as Solomon saith, *an honour to a man to cease from strife;* and consequently also a disgrace to him to continue therein: that rage and fury may be the excellencies of beasts, and the exerting their natural animosity in strife and combat may become them; but reason and discretion are the singular eminences of men, and the use of these the most natural and commendable method of deciding controversies among them: and that it extremely misbecomes them that are endowed with those excellent faculties so to abuse them, as not to apprehend each others' meanings, but to ground vexatious quarrels upon the mistake of them; not to be able by reasonable expedients to compound differences, but with mutual damage and inconvenience to prorogue and increase them: not to discern how exceedingly better it is to be helpful and beneficial, than to be mischievous and troublesome to one another. How foolishly and unskil-

Prov. xx. 3.

fully they judge, that think by unkind speech and harsh dealing to allay men's distempers, alter their opinions, or remove their prejudices; as if they should attempt to kill by ministering nourishment, or to extinguish a flame by pouring oil upon it. How childish a thing it is eagerly to contend about trifles, for the superiority in some impertinent contest, for the satisfaction of some petty humour, for the possession of some inconsiderable toy; yea, how barbarous and brutish a thing it is to be fierce and impetuous in the pursuit of things that please us, snarling at, biting, and tearing all competitors of our game, or opposers of our undertaking. But how divine and amiable, how worthy of human nature, of civil breeding, of prudent consideration it is, to restrain partial desires, to condescend to equal terms, to abate from rigorous pretences, to appease discords, and vanquish enmities by courtesy and discretion; like the best and wisest commanders, who by skilful conduct, and patient attendance upon opportunity, without striking of stroke, or shedding of blood, subdue their enemy. SERM. XXX.

3. How that peace, with its near alliance and concomitants, its causes and effects, love, meekness, gentleness, and patience, are in sacred writ reputed the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit, issues of divine grace, and offsprings of heavenly wisdom; producing like themselves a goodly progeny of righteous deeds. But that emulation, hatred, wrath, variance, and strife, derive their extraction from fleshly lust, hellish craft, or beastly folly; propagating themselves also into a like ugly brood of wicked works. For so saith St. James, *If ye have bitter zeal and strife in your hearts, glory not* [a], *nor be deceived untruly: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish: For where emulation and strife are, there is* [b] *tumult, and every* [c] *naughty thing: but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle* [d], *obsequious, full of mercy* (or beneficence) *and of good fruits, without partiality and dissimulation: And the fruit of righteousness is sowed in peace to those that make peace: And from whence are wars and quarrels among you? Are they not hence, even from your lusts,* Gal. v. Jam. iii. 14. —18. iv. 1.

[a] Καὶ μὴ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας.
[b] Ἀκαταστασία, *confusion.*
[c] Φαῦλον πρᾶγμα.
[d] Εὐπειθής.

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that war in your members? Likewise, *He loveth transgression that loveth strife;* and, *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes*, saith Solomon. That the most wicked and miserable of creatures is described by titles denoting enmity and discord: *the hater* (Satan), *the enemy* (ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος), *the accuser* (ὁ κατήγορος), *the slanderer* (ὁ διάβολος), *the destroyer* (ὁ ἀπολλύων), the furious dragon, and mischievously treacherous snake: and how sad it is to imitate him in his practices, to resemble him in his qualities. But that the best, most excellent, and most happy of Beings delights to be styled, and accordingly to express himself, *The God of love, mercy, and peace;* and his blessed Son to be called, and to be, *The Prince of peace*, the great *Mediator*, *Reconciler*, and *Peace-maker;* who is also said from on high to have visited us, *to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; and to guide our feet in the ways of peace.* That, lastly, no devotion is pleasing, no oblation acceptable to God, conjoined with hatred, or proceeding from an unreconciled mind: for, *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remeberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*, saith our Saviour.

Prov. xvii. 19. xviii. 6.

Qui posuit in cœlo bellum, in paradiso fraudem, odium inter primos fratres. *Aug.*

Matt. xiii. 28. Ἀντίδικος, 1 Pet. v. 8. A murderer, John viii. 44. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Philip iv. 9. 1 Thess. v. 23. 2 Thes. iii. 16. Heb. vii. Luke i. 79.

Χαίρει γὰρ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ λογικῶν τῶν ζώων ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἐκτρέπεται τὴν διαφωνίαν. *Orig. c. Cels.* 8. p. 424.

Matt. v. 23, 24.

I close up all with this corollary: that if we must live lovingly and peaceably with all men, then much more are we obliged to do so with all Christians: to whom by nearer and firmer bands of holy alliance we are related; by more precious communions in faith and devotion we are endeared; by more peculiar and powerful obligations of divine commands, sacramental vows, and formal professions we are engaged: our spiritual brethren, members of the same mystical body, temples of the same Holy Spirit, servants of the same Lord, subjects of the same Prince, professors of the same truth, partakers of the same hope, heirs of the same promise, and candidates of the same everlasting happiness.

Now Almighty God, the most good and beneficent Maker,

gracious Lord, and merciful Preserver of all things, infuse into our hearts those heavenly graces of meekness, patience, and benignity, grant us and his whole church, and all his creation, to serve him quietly here, and in a blissful rest to praise and magnify him for ever: to whom, with his blessed Son, the great Mediator and Prince of peace, and with his Holy Spirit, the ever-flowing spring of all love, joy, comfort, and peace, be all honour, glory, and praise. And,

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXI. *

THE DUTY AND REWARD OF BOUNTY TO THE POOR.

PSAL. cxii. 9.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour.

SERM. XXXI. Verse 1.

As this whole Psalm appears to have a double intent; one to describe the proper actions and affections of a truly religious or pious man; (of a man *who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments;*) the other to declare the happiness of such a man's state, consequent upon those his affections and actions, whether in way of natural result, or of gracious recompence from God: so doth this verse particularly contain both a good part of a pious man's character, and some considerable instances of his felicity. The first words (*He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor*) express part of his character; the latter (*His righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour*) assign instances of his felicity. So that our text hath two parts, one affording us good information concerning our duty, the other yielding great encouragement to the performance thereof; for we are obliged to follow the pious man's practice, and so doing we shall assuredly partake of his condition. These parts we shall in order prosecute, endeavouring (by God's as-

* This Sermon was preached at the Spital upon Wednesday in Easter week, A. D. 1671.

sistance) somewhat to illustrate the words themselves, to confirm the truths couched in them, and to inculcate the duties which they imply. SERM. XXXI.

For the first part, *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor*; these words in general do import the liberal bounty and mercy which a pious man is wont to exercise; doing which doth in good part constitute him pious, and signally declareth him such; is a necessary ingredient of his piety, and a conspicuous mark thereof. But particularly they insinuate some things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the object of those acts.

He hath dispersed, he hath given. Those words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is dispersed and given by him, may be supposed to imply a kind of universality in the matter of his beneficence; that he bestoweth whatever he hath within compass of his possession, or his power; his τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, (the things which he hath,) and his τὰ ἐνόντα, (the things which he may,) according to the prescriptions of our Lord in the Gospel. Every thing, I say, which he hath in substance, or can do by his endeavour, that may conduce to the support of the life, or the health, or the welfare in any kind of his neighbour, to the succour or relief of his indigency, to the removal or easement of his affliction, he may well here be understood to disperse and give. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, entertaining the stranger, ransoming the captive, easing the oppressed, comforting the sorrowful, assisting the weak, instructing or advising the ignorant, together with all such kinds or instances of beneficence, may be conceived either meant directly as the matter of the good man's dispersing and giving, or by just analogy of reason reducible thereto: substantial alms, as the most sensible and obvious matter of bounty, was (it is probable) especially intended, but thence no manner of expressing it is to be excluded; for the same reasons which oblige us, the same affections which dispose us to bestow our money, or deal our bread, will equally bind and move us to contribute our endeavour and advice, for the sustenance and comfort of our

Luke xii. 33. xi. 41.

SERM. XXXI

poor neighbour. Answerably our discourse will more expressly regard the principal matter, liberal communication of our goods; but it may be referred to all sorts of beneficence.

Farther, the word *dispersed* intimateth the nature of his bounty, in exclusion of practices different from it. He *disperseth*, and is therefore not tenacious, doth not hoard up his goods, or keep them close to himself, for the gratifying his covetous humour, or nourishing his pride, or pampering his sensuality; but sendeth them abroad for the use and benefit of others. He *disperseth* his goods, and therefore doth not fling them away altogether, as if he were angry with them, or weary of them, as if he loathed or despised them; but fairly and softly with good consideration he disposeth of them here and there, as reason and need do require. He *disperseth* them *to the poor*, not dissipateth them among vain and lewd persons in wanton or wicked profusions, in riotous excesses, in idle divertisements, in expensive curiosities, in hazardous gamings, in any such courses which swallow whole all that a man hath, or do so cripple him, that he becomes unable to disperse any thing: our good man is to be understood wisely provident, honestly industrious, and soberly frugal, that he may have wherewith to be just first, and then liberal [a].

Eph. iv. 28.

His *dispersing* also (or *scattering*, so the * Hebrew word here used is otherwhere rendered: *There is*, saith the Wise Man, *that scattereth, and yet increaseth:* where we may remark, that this word singly by itself, without any adjunct matter to limit or interpret it, is used to signify this kind of practice. This his *dispersing*, I say, also) denotes the extent of the pious man's bounty, that it is very large and diffusive, and in a manner unrestrained; that it reacheth to many places, and is withheld from no persons within the verge of his power and opportunity to do good. This practice commonly, by a like phrase, (unto which perhaps this word refers) is termed *sowing: He,*

* פזר

Prov. xi. 24.

[a] Οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε χρήματ' ἔχειν, μὴ ἐπιμελώμενον, ὅπως ἔχῃ. *Arist. Eth.* iv. 1.

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saith St. Paul, *which soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully.* Now, he that soweth, having chosen a good soil, and a fit season, doth not regard one particular spot, but throweth all about so much as his hand can hold, so far as the strength of his arm doth carry. It is likewise called *watering; (He that watereth,* saith Solomon, *shall be watered himself:)* which expression also seemeth to import a plentiful and promiscuous effusion of good, dropping in showers upon dry and parched places; that is, upon persons dry for want, or parched with affliction. So the good man doth not plant his bounty in one small hole, or spout it on one narrow spot, but with an open hand disseminates it, with an impartial regard distils it all about. He stints it not to his own family or relations; to his neighbours, or friends, or benefactors; to those of his own sect and opinion, or of his humour and disposition; to such as serve him, or oblige him, or please him; whom some private interest ties, or some particular affection endears him to; but scatters it indifferently and unconfinedly toward all men that need it; toward mere strangers, yea, toward known enemies; toward such who never did him any good, or can ever be able to do any; yea, even toward them who have done evil to him, and may be presumed ready to do more [b]. Nothing in his neighbour but absence of need, nothing in himself but defect of ability, doth curb or limit his beneficence. In that προθυμία, (that proclivity and promptitude of mind) which St. Paul speaketh of, he doth good every where: wherever a man is, there is a room for his wishing well, and doing good, if he can: he observes that rule of the Apostle, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* So the pious man hath *dispersed.* It follows,

2 Cor. ix. 6, 10. Gal. vi. 7. 8. Prov. xi. 18. Prov. xi. 25.

2 Cor. viii. 12. Ubicunque homo est, ibi beneficio locus est. *Sen. de Vit. B.* cap. 24. Gal. vi. 10. 2 Cor. ix. 13.

He hath given to the poor. These words denote the

[b] Ἐὰν τοῖς τινὰ κακῶς πάσχοντα, μηδὲν περιεργάζῃ λοιπόν· ἔχει τὸ δικαίωμα τῆς βοηθείας, τῷ κακῶς παθεῖν αὐτόν—τῷ Θεῷ ἐχθρὸς, κἂν Ἕλλην, κἂν Ἰουδαῖος. *Chrys. in Heb. Orat.* 10.

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freeness of his bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: he not only lendeth (though he also doth that upon reasonable occasion; for, *A good man*, as it is said before in this Psalm, *sheweth mercy and lendeth;* and otherwhere, *The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth;* he, I say, not only sometimes willingly lendeth) to those who in time may repay or requite him; but he freely giveth to the poor, that is, to those from whom he can expect no retribution back. He doth not (as good and pious, he doth not) present the rich: to do so is but a cleanly way of begging, or a subtile kind of trade; it is hardly courtesy; it is surely no bounty; for such persons (if they are not very sordid or very careless, and such men are not usually much troubled with presents) will, it is likely, overdo him, or at least will be even with him in kindness. In doing this, there is little virtue; for it there will be small reward. For, *If you do good to them who do good to you*, (or whom you conceive able and disposed to requite you,) πόια χάρις, *what thanks* are due to you? For that, saith our Saviour, *even sinners* (even men notoriously bad) *do the same: And if you lend to them from whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? For sinners even lend to sinners, to receive as much again.* All men commonly, the bad no less than the good, are apt to be superfluously kind in heaping favours on those whom fortune befriends, and whose condition requires not their courtesy; every one almost is ready to adopt himself into the kindred, or to screw himself into the friendship of the wealthy and prosperous[c]: but where kindred is of use, there it is seldom found; it is commonly so deaf, as not to hear when it is called; so blind, as not to discern its proper object and natural season, *(the time of adversity, for which a brother is born.)* Men disclaim alliance with the needy, and shun his acquaintance; so the Wise Man observed,[d] *All the brethren of the poor do hate him; how*

Ps. cxii. 5.

Ps. xxxvii. 26.

Qui diviti donat, petit. He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want. Prov. xxii. 16.

Luke vi. 33, 34.

Prov. xvii. 17.

[d] Prov. xiv, 7, 4. Εἰ πράσσει τὰ φίλων ὁ δοῦναι, ἵν' τις δυσχῇ. *Euripid.*

[c] Ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῷ, τί χρὴ φίλων; Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς ὠφελεῖν δίλων. *Eurip. in Orest.*

Τῶν εὐτυχούντων πάντες εἰσὶ συγγενεῖς.

much more do his friends go far from him? Thus it is in vulgar practice: but the pious man is more judicious, more just, and more generous in the placing of his favours; he is courteous to purpose, he is good to those who need. He, as such, doth not make large entertainments *for his friends, his brethren, his kindred, his rich neighbours;* but observes that precept of our Lord, *When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* Thus the pious man giveth, that is, with free heart and a pure intention bestoweth his goods on the indigent, without designing any benefit, or hoping for any requital to himself; except from God, in conscience, respect, and love to whom he doeth it.

Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.

It may be also material to observe the form of speech here used in reference to the time: *He hath dispersed, and he hath given;* or, *He doth disperse, he doth give;* (for in the Hebrew language the past and present times are not distinguished:) which manner of speaking may seem to intimate the reality, or the certainty, and the constancy of his practice in this kind; for what is past or present, we are infallibly secure of; and in morals, what one is said to have done, or to do, is always understood according to habit or custom. It is not, *He will disperse, he will give;* that were no fit description of a good man; to pretend to, would be no argument of piety; those words might import uncertainty and delay in his practice. He that saith, *I will give,* may be fallacious in his professions, may be inconsistent with his resolutions, may wilfully or negligently let slip the due season of performing it. Our good man is not a *Doson*, or *Will-give*, (like that king of Macedon, who got that name from often signifying an intention of giving, but never giving in effect;) he not only purposes well, and promises fairly for the future, but he hath effectually done it, and perseveres doing it upon every fit occasion. He puts not his neighbour into tedious expectations, nor puts him off with frivolous excuses, saying to him, as it is in the Proverbs, *Go, and*

Ἐπεκλήθη δὲ Δώσων ὡς ἐπαγγελτικὸς μέν, οὐ τελεσιουργὸς δὲ τῶν ὑποσχέσεων. *Plut. in Paulo Æmil.*

Prov. iii. 28

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come again, and to-morrow I will give, when he hath it by him: He bids him not have patience, or says unto him, *Depart in peace,* when his need is urgent, and his pain impatient, when hunger or cold do then pinch him, when sickness incessantly vexeth him, when present straits and burdens oppress him; but he affordeth a ready, quick, and seasonable relief.

Jam. ii. 16.

He hath dispersed, and *given,* while he lives, not reserving the disposal of all at once upon his death, or by his last will; that unwilling will, whereby men would seem to give somewhat, when they can keep nothing; drawing to themselves those commendations and thanks, which are only due to their mortality; whenas were they immortal, they would never be liberal: No; it is, *he hath freely dispersed;* not an inevitable necessity will extort it from him; it cannot be said of him, that he never does well, but when he dies; so he hath done it really and surely.

Avarus, nisi cum moritur nil recte facit. *Laber.*

He also doth it constantly, through all the course of his life, whenever good opportunity presents itself. He doth it not by fits, or by accident, according to unstable causes or circumstances moving him, (when bodily temper or humour inclineth him, when a sad object makes vehement impression on him, when shame obligeth him to comply with the practice of others, when he may thereby promote some design, or procure some glory to himself,) but his practice is constant and uniform, being drawn from steady principles, and guided by certain rules, proceeding from reverence to God, and good-will toward man, following the clear dictates and immutable laws of conscience. Thus hath the pious man *dispersed,* and *given to the poor:* and let thus much suffice for explicatory reflection upon the first words.

The main drift and purport of which is, to represent the liberal exercising of bounty and mercy to be the necessary duty, the ordinary practice, and the proper character of a truly pious man; so that performing such acts is a good sign of true piety, and omitting them is a certain argument of ungodliness. For the demonstration of

which points, and for exciting us to a practice answerable, I shall propound several considerations, whereby the plain reasonableness, the great weight, the high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its strict connection with other principal duties of piety, will appear. And first, I will shew with what advantage the holy Scripture represents it to us, or presses it upon us. SERM. XXXI.

1. We may consider, that there is no sort of duties which God hath more expressly commanded, or more earnestly inculcated, than these of bounty and mercy toward our brethren: whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in God's esteem, may be inferred. Even in the ancient law, we may observe very careful provisions made for engaging men to works of this kind, and the performance of them is with huge life and urgency prescribed: *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.—Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, unto thy poor, and to thy needy in the land.* So did Moses, in God's name, with language very significant and emphatical, enjoin to the children of Israel. The holy prophets also do commonly with an especial heat and vigour press these duties, most smartly reproving the transgression or neglect of them; especially when they reclaim men from their wicked courses, urging them seriously to return unto God and goodness, they propose this practice as a singular instance most expressive of their conversion, most apt to appease God's wrath, most effectual to the recovery of his favour. *Wash you*, saith God in Isaiah, *make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well.* So in general he exhorts to repentance: then immediately he subjoins these choice instances thereof: *Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.—Come now*, then he adds, *let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* When Daniel would prescribe to king Nebuchadnezzar the best way of amendment, and the surest means of averting God's

1. Head of discourse.

Deut. xv. 7.

Deut. xv. 11.

Isa. i. 16. 17.

Isa. i. 17, 18. Jer. vi. 5, 6.

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judgments impendent on him, he thus speaks: *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee; break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor* [d]. This he culled out as of all pious acts chiefly grateful to God, and clearly testifying repentance; and, *so very impious a person was alms able to justify*, says the Father thereupon [e]. So also, when God himself would declare what those acts are which render penitential devotions most agreeable to him, and most effectual, he thus expresseth his mind: *Is not this the fast which I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thine house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?* Of so great consideration and moment was this sort of duties, even under that old dispensation of weakness, servility, and fear; so much tenderness of compassion and benignity did God exact even from that hard-hearted and worldly people, who were so little capable of the best rules, and had encouragements, in comparison, so mean toward performances of this nature. The same we may well conceive, under the more perfect discipline of universal amity, of ingenuity, of spiritual grace and goodness, in a higher strain, with more force and greater obligation to be imposed on us, who have so much stronger engagements, and immensely greater encouragements to them. And so indeed it is: for those precepts delivered by our Lord, *Sell all that you have, and give alms; If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor; Give to every man that asketh thee; Treasure not up to yourselves treasures upon the earth*, do indeed sound high, but are not insignificant or impertinent. They can-

Dan. iv. 27

Isa. lviii. 6, 7.

Luke xii. 33. vi. 30. xi. 41. Matt. xix. 21. vi. 19.

[d] Τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι· so the LXX. render those words, reading, it seems, פרת for פרק.

[e] Ναβουχοδονόσορ, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀσεβῆ, ἴσχυσεν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη δικαιῶσαι. *Athan. ad. Antioch. Quæst.* 87.

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not signify or design less, than that we should be always, in affection and disposition of mind, ready to part with any thing we have for the succour of our poor brethren; that to the utmost of our ability (according to moral estimation prudently rated) upon all occasions we should really express that disposition in our practice; that we are exceedingly obliged to the continual exercise of these duties in a very eminent degree. These indeed were the duties which our Lord, as he did frequently in his discourse commend and prescribe, so he did most signally exemplify in his practice; his whole life being in effect but one continual act of most liberal bounty and mercy toward mankind; in charity to whom he outdid his own severest rules, being content never to possess any wealth, never to enjoy any ease in this world. And therein, (both as to doctrine and practice) did the holy Apostles closely follow their Master: *As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.* So they throughly in deeds practised these duties, which in words they taught and earnestly pressed; admonishing their converts to [a] *distribute to the necessities of the saints*, to [b] *do good to all men*; [c] *to do good, and to communicate, not to forget; to shew mercy with cheerfulness*; to [d] *put on bowels of mercy*; to [e] *be kind and tender-hearted one toward another*; to *abound in the grace of liberality.* Such are their directions and injunctions to all Christian people; so did they preach themselves, and so they enjoined others to preach. *Charge the rich in this world*, saith St. Paul to his scholar Timothy, *that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*; and, *These things*, saith he likewise, advising Bishop Titus, *I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which believe in God may be careful to maintain good works*: what *good works* he meaneth, the reason adjoined doth shew; *For these things*, saith he, *are good and profitable unto men.*

2 Cor. vi. 10.

[a] Rom. xii. 13.
[b] Gal. vi. 10.
[c] Heb. xiii. 16.
[d] Coloss. iii. 12.
[e] Eph. iv. 32.
2 Cor. viii. 7.
1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.
Tit. iii. 8.

2. It is indeed observable, that as in every kind that which is most excellent doth commonly assume to itself the name of the whole kind; so among the parts of righteousness (which word is used to comprehend all virtue and good-

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ness) this of exercising bounty and mercy is peculiarly called *righteousness;* so that *righteousness* and *mercifulness*, (or *alms-deeds*,) the righteous and bountiful person, are in Scripture expression ordinarily confounded, as it were, or undistinguishably put one for the other; it being often, when commendations are given to righteousness, and rewards promised to righteous persons, hard to discern, whether the general observance of God's law, or the special practice of these duties, are concerned in them. Likewise works of this nature are in way of peculiar excellency termed *good works;* and to perform them is usually styled, *to do good*, and *to do well;* ([a] ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεσθαι, [b] καλὸν ποιεῖν, [c] ἀγαθοεργεῖν, [d] ἀγαθοποιεῖν, [e] εὐποιεῖν, [f] εὐεργετεῖν, are words applied to this purpose;) which manners of expression do argue the eminent dignity of these performances.

[a] Acts ix. 36. 1 Tim. v. 10. vi. 18. Tit. iii. 8, 14. 2 Cor. ix. 8. [b] Gal. vi. 9. [c] Ib. 10. [d] Luke vi. 35. [e] Heb. xiii. 16. [f] Acts x. 38.

3. We may also consequently mark, that in those places of Scripture where the divine law is abridged, and religion summed up into a few particulars of main importance, these duties constantly make a part: so when the prophet Micah briefly reckons up those things which are best in the law, and chiefly required by God, the whole catalogue of them consisting but of three particulars, *mercy* comes in for one; *He hath shewed thee, O man*, saith he, *what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Likewise of those (βαρύτερα τῦ νόμυ, those) more substantial and *weighty things of God's law*, the neglect of which our Saviour objecteth as an argument of impiety, and a cause of woe, to those pretending zealots, this is one: *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* The sum of St. John the Baptist's instruction of the people is by St. Luke reduced to this point; *The people asked him, saying, What shall we do?* He answering saith unto them, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* St. James's system of religion is this: *Pure*

Micah vi. 8. Matt. xxiii. 23. Luke iii 10, 11. Jam. i. 27.

and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, (that is, to comfort and relieve all distressed and helpless persons,) *and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* St. Paul seems to be yet more compendious and close: *Bear ye*, saith he, *one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.* Yea, God himself compriseth all the substantial part of religion herein, when, comparing it with the circumstantial part, he saith, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* Gal. vi. 2. Hos. vi. 6.

4. It is in like manner considerable, that in the general descriptions of piety and goodness, the practice of these duties is specified as a grand ingredient of them. In this Psalm, where such a description is intended, it is almost the only particular instance; and it is not only mentioned, but reiterated in divers forms of expression. In the 37th Psalm it is affirmed and repeated, that *the righteous sheweth mercy; he sheweth mercy, and giveth; he sheweth mercy, and lendeth.* In the Proverbs it is a commendation of the virtuous woman, *whose price is far above rubies*, that *she stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, stretcheth forth both her hands to the needy.* And in Ezekiel, (which is especially remarkable,) the 18th chapter, where the principal things constituting a pious man are more than once professedly enumerated, this among a very few other particulars is expressed, and taketh up much room in the account; of such a person (who *shall surely live, and not die*, that is, who certainly shall abide in God's favour, and enjoy the happy consequences thereof) it is supposed, that he *neither hath oppressed any, nor hath withholden the pledge, nor hath spoiled by violence; but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, and hath taken off his hand from the poor.* Ps. xxxvii. 21, 26. The righteous giveth, and spareth not. Prov. xxi. 26. Prov. xxxi. 20. Ezek. xviii. 7, 16.

5. Also in the particular histories of good men, this sort of practice is specially taken notice of, and expressed in their characters. In the story of our father Abraham, his benignity to strangers, and hospitableness, is remarkable among all his deeds of goodness, being propounded to us as a pattern and encouragement to the like practice. In Heb. xiii. 2.

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this the conscience of Job did solace itself, as in a solid assurance of his integrity: *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame; I was a father to the poor. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?* Hence also did the good publican recommend himself to the favour and approbation of our Saviour, saying, *Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor:* hence did *salvation come to* his *house:* hence he is proclaimed *a son of Abraham.* Of Dorcas, that good woman, who was so gracious and precious among the disciples, this is the commendation and character; *She was full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did;* such practice made her capable of that favour, so great and extraordinary, the being restored to life; at least in St. Chrysostom's judgment: *The force of her alms,* saith he, *did conquer the tyranny of death*[f]. Cornelius also, that excellent person, who was, though a Gentile, so acceptable to God, and had so extraordinary graces conferred on him, is thus represented; *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* We may add, that to be hospitable (one branch of these duties, and inferring the rest) is reckoned a qualification of those who are to be the guides and patterns of goodness unto others. And particularly, one fit to be promoted to a widow's office in the church is thus described: *Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children; if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints' feet; if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every good work.*

Job xxix. 12, 13, 15, 16.

Job xxx. 25.

Luke xix. 8, 9.

Acts ix. 36.

Acts x. 2.

1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 8.

1 Tim. v. 10.

6. So near to the heart of piety doth the holy Scripture lay the practice of these duties: and no wonder; for it often expressly declares charity to be the fulfilling

Gal. v. 14. Rom. xiii. 9, 10.

[f] Ἡ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης δύναμις ἐνίκησε θανάτου τὴν τυραννίδα. *Chrys. in Gen. Orat.* 55.

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of God's law, as the best expression of all our duty toward God, of faith in him, love and reverence of him, and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty toward our neighbour. And of charity, works of bounty and mercy are both the chief instances, and the plainest signs: for whereas all charity doth consist either in mental desire, or in verbal signification, or in effectual performance of good to our neighbour; this last is the end, the completion, and the assurance of the rest. Good-will is indeed the root of charity; but that lies under ground, and out of sight; nor can we conclude its being or life without visible fruits of beneficence. Good words are at best but fair leaves thereof, such as may, and too often do, proceed from a weak and barren disposition of mind. But these *good works* are *real fruits*, (so St. Paul calls them; *Let ours also*, saith he, *learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful,*) which declare a true life, and a good strength of charity in the bearer of them: by them τὸ γνήσιον τῆς ἀγάπης, *the sincerity* (or genuineness) *of our charity is proved.* For as no man ever doth impress a false stamp on the finest metal; so costly charity is seldom counterfeit. It is to decline spending their goods or their pains, that men forge and feign; pretending to make up in wishing well, the defect of doing so, and paying words instead of things: but he that freely imparts what he hath, or can do for his neighbour's good, needs no other argument to evince that he loves in good earnest, nor can indeed well use any other: for words, if actions are wanting, seem abusive; and if actions are present they are superfluous. Wherefore St. John thus advises: *My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue,* (ἀλλ' ἔργῳ,) *but in work and in truth.* To love in *work*, and to love in *truth*, he signifies to be the same thing; and to pretend love in speech, without practising it in deed, he implies not allowable. And St. James in way of comparison says, that as faith without works is dead, so love without beneficence is useless. For, *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto him, Depart in peace,*

1 Tim. i. 5. Matt. vii. 12.

Ἐπίτασις ἀγάπης ὁ ἔλεος. *Greg. Nyss. in Matt.* v. 7.

Tit. iii. 14. Rom. xv. 28. Phil. iv. 17.

2 Cor. viii. 8.

1 John iii. 18.

James ii. 15, 16, 17.

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be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith without works is dead. Cold wishes of good, working no real benefit to our neighbour, and a faint assent unto truth, producing no constant obedience to God, are things near of kin, and of like value; both of little worth or use. Charity then being the main point of religion, mercy and bounty being the chief parts of charity, well may these duties be placed in so high a rank, according to the divine heraldry of Scripture.

7. To enforce which observations, and that we may be farther certified about the weight and worth of these duties, we may consider, that to the observance of them most ample and excellent rewards are assigned; that, in return for what we bestow on our poor brethren, God hath promised all sorts of the best mercies and blessings to us. The best of all good things, (that which in David's opinion was better than life itself,) the fountain of all blessings, (God's love and favour, or mercy,) is procured thereby, or is annexed to it. For, *God loveth a cheerful giver*, saith St. Paul; and, *The merciful shall obtain mercy*, saith our Saviour: and, *Mercy rejoiceth against judgment*, (or boasteth and triumpheth over it; ἔλεος καλαυχᾶται κρίσεως· that is, it appeaseth God's wrath, and prevents our condemnation and punishment,) saith St. James; God will not continue displeased with him, nor will withhold his mercy from him, who is kind and merciful to his neighbour. It is true, if rightly understood, what the Hebrew Wise Man saith, *Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement for sins.* For this practice hath the nature and name of a sacrifice, and is declared as such both in excellency and efficacy to surpass all other sacrifices; to be most acceptable to God, most available for expiation of guilt, most effectual in obtaining mercy and favour. Other sacrifices performed in obedience to God's appointment (on virtue of our Lord's perfect obedience, and with regard to his pure sacrifice of himself) did in their way propitiate God, and atone sin: but this hath an intrinsic worth, and a natural aptitude to

Ps. lxiii. 3.

2 Cor. ix. 7.

Matt. v. 7.

James ii. 13.

Matt vi. 14.

Ecclus. iii. 30.

Si nudum vestias, teipsum induis justitiam. *Ambr. Offic.* i. 11. *Hier. in Psalm* cxxxiii. *Chrys.* tom. v. Orat. 55.

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those purposes. Other obligations did signify a willingness to render a due homage to God: this really and immediately performs it. They were shadows or images well resembling that duty, (parting with any thing we have for the sake of God, and for purchasing his favour,) whereof this is the body and substance. This is therefore preferred, as in itself excelling the rest, and more estimable in God's sight; so that in comparison or competition therewith, the other seem to be slighted and rejected. *I will*, saith God, *have mercy, and not sacrifice:* and, *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?* Will he? that is, he will not be pleased with such sacrifices, if they be abstracted from the more delightful sacrifices of bounty and mercy. God never made an exception against these, or derogated from them in any case: they absolutely and perpetually are, as St. Paul speaketh, *odours of a sweet smell, sacrifices acceptable and well-pleasing to God.* And the Apostle to the Hebrews seconds him: *To do good*, saith he, *and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* By these, all other works and all enjoyments are sanctified: for, *Give alms*, saith our Lord, *of what ye have; and, behold, all things are pure unto you.* Such charitable persons are therefore frequently pronounced blessed, that is, in effect instated in a confluence of all good things. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor*, says the Psalmist; and, *He that hath a bountiful eye is blessed*, saith Solomon; and, *He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he*, saith the Wise Man again; and, *Blessed are the merciful*, saith our Lord himself. So in gross and generally. Particularly also and in retail, the greatest blessings are expressly allotted to this practice; prosperity in all our affairs is promised thereto. *Thou*, saith Moses, *shalt surely give thy poor brother, and thine heart shall not be grieved that thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.* Stability in a good condition is ordinarily consequent thereon: so the prophet Daniel implies, when, advising king Nebuchad-

Hos. vi. 6. Micah vi. 7.

Phil. iv. 18.

Heb. xiii. 16.

Luke xi. 41.

Psal. xli. 1.

Prov. xxii. 9. xiv. 21.

Matt. v. 7.

Deut. xv. 10.

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nezzar to these works, he adds, *If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* Deliverance from evil incumbent, protection in imminent danger, and support in afflictions, are the sure rewards thereof: so the Psalmist assures us: *Blessed*, saith he, *is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* Security from all want is likewise a recompense proper thereto: for, *He that giveth to the poor shall not lack*, saith the Wise Man. *If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light arise in obscurity*, &c. Thriving in wealth and estate is another special reward: for, *The liberal soul shall be made fat;* the same author gives us his word for it. Even of the good things here below, to those who for his sake in this or any other way do *let go houses or lands*, our Lord promiseth the return of *a hundred-fold*, either in kind, or in value. So great encouragements are annexed to this practice, even in relation to the concernments of this transitory life; but to them beside God hath destinated rewards incomparably more considerable and precious, spiritual and eternal rewards, treasures of heavenly wealth, crowns of endless glory, the perfection of joy and bliss to be dispensed *at the resurrection of the just. He that for my sake hath left houses or lands, shall receive a hundred-fold now at this time*, (or in this present life,) *and in the world to come shall inherit everlasting life;* so infallible truth hath assured us. They who perform these duties are said to *make themselves bags which wax not old, a treasure that faileth not in the heavens;* to *make themselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, who when they fail*, (when they depart, and leave their earthly wealth,) *will receive them into everlasting habitations;* to *lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Such rewards are promised to the observers.

Dan. iv. 27.

Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3.

Prov. xxviii. 27.

Isa. lviii. 10, 11, 12.

Prov. xi. 25.

Matt. xix. 29.

Luke xiv. 14.

Matt. xix. 29.

Mark x. 29. 30.

Luke xii. 33. xvi. 9.

1 Tim. vi. 19.

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8. And correspondently grievous punishments are designed and denounced to the transgressors of these duties; the worst of miseries is their portion and doom: they, for being such, do forfeit God's love and favour; they lose his blessing and protection; they can have no sure possession, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their estate; for *He*, saith St. James, *shall have judgment without mercy, who showeth no mercy.* And of such a person it is said in Job, *That which he laboureth for he shall restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein; because he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor.* (Not only because he hath unjustly oppressed, but because he hath uncharitably forsaken the poor.) If by the divine forbearance such persons do seem to enjoy a fair *portion in this life*, (*prospering in the world, and increasing in riches,*) they will find a sad reckoning behind in the other world: this will be result of that audit; *Woe be unto you, rich men, for ye have received your consolation;* (such rich men are meant, who have got, or kept, or used their wealth basely; who have detained all the consolation it yields to themselves, and imparted none to others;) and, *Remember, son, thou didst receive thy good things in this life;* (so didst receive them, as to swallow them, and spend them here, without any provision or regard for the future in the use of them;) and, *Cast that unprofitable servant* (who made no good use of his talent) *into utter darkness.* Such will be the fate of *every one that treasures up to himself, and is not rich unto God;* not rich in piety and charity, not rich in performing for God's sake works of bounty and mercy.

James ii. 13. Job xx. 18, 19. Ps. xvii. 14. lxxiii. 12. Luke vi. 24. Luke xvi. 25. Matt. xxv. 30. Luke xii. 21.

9. It is indeed most considerable, that at the final reckoning, when all men's actions shall be strictly scanned, and justly sentenced according to their true desert, a special regard will be had to the discharge or neglect of these duties. It is the bountiful and merciful persons, who have relieved Christ in his poor members and brethren, who in that day will appear to be the sheep at the right hand, and shall hear the good Shepherd's voice uttering

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those joyful words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.* He doth not say, because you have made goodly professions, because you have been orthodox in your opinions, because you have frequented religious exercises, (have prayed often and long, have kept many fasts, and heard many sermons,) because you have been staunch in your conversations, because you have been punctual in your dealings, because you have maintained a specious guise of piety, sobriety, and justice; (although, indeed, he that will come off well at that great trial, must be responsible, and able to yield a good account in respect to all those particulars;) but because you have been charitably benign and helpful to persons in need and distress, therefore blessed are you, therefore enter into the kingdom of glorious bliss prepared for such persons. This proceeding more than intimates, that, in the judgment of our Lord, no sort of virtue or good practice is to be preferred before that of charitable bounty; or rather that, in his esteem, none is equal thereto; so that if the question were put to him, which is one of them to Antiochus, (in Athanasius's works,) which is the most eminent virtue? our Lord would resolve it no otherwise than is done by that father, affirming, that mercifulness is the queen of virtues; for that, at the final account, the examination chiefly proceeds upon that; it is made the special touchstone of piety, and the peculiar ground of happiness. On the other side, those who have been deficient in these performances (uncharitable and unmerciful persons) will at the last trial appear to be the wretched goats on the left hand, unto whom this uncomfortable speech shall by the great Judge be pronounced: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not*

Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36.

Athanasius, tom. ii.

Matt. xxv. 41, 42, 43.

in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. It is not, we may see, for having done that which in this world is called rapine or wrong, for having pillaged or cozened their neighbour, for having committed adultery or murder, or any other thing prohibited, that these unhappy men are said to be formerly impeached, and finally condemned to that miserable doom; but for having been unkind and unmerciful to their poor brethren [ε]: this at that high tribunal will pass for a most enormous crime, for the capital offence; for this it is that they shall be cursed, and cast down into a wretched consortship with those malicious and merciless fiends, unto whose disposition they did so nearly approach.

Thus it appears how mighty a stress God in the holy Scripture doth lay upon these duties, so peremptorily commanding them, so vehemently pressing them, so highly commending them, so graciously by promises alluring us to the performance, so dreadfully by threatenings deterring us from the neglect of them. What an affront then will it be to God's authority, what a distrust to his word, what a contempt of his power, his justice, his wisdom, what a despite to his goodness and mercy, if, notwithstanding all these declarations of his will and purposes, we shall presume to be uncharitable in this kind! There are also considerations, (very many, very clear, and very strong,) which discover the great reasonableness and equity of these laws, with our indispensable obligation to obey them; the which indeed with greater force do exact these duties from us, and do more earnestly plead in the poor man's behalf, than he can beg or cry. If we either look up unto God, or down upon our poor neighbour, if we reflect upon ourselves, or consider our wealth itself, every where we may discern various reasons obliging us, and various motives inducing us to the practice of these duties.

In regard to God,

ε Οὐκ ὅτι διηρπάκασιν, οὐδ' ὅτι σεσυλήκασιν, οὐ μεμοιχεύκασιν, ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων πεποιήκασιν, ταύτην τὴν τάξιν κατακριθέντες, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ Χριστὸν διὰ τῶν δεομένων περιεσπάσαντο. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 16.

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II. Head of discourse.

1. We may consider, that, by exercising of bounty and mercy, we are kind and courteous to God himself; by neglecting those duties, we are unkind and rude to him: for that what of good or evil is by us done to the poor, God interprets and accepts as done to himself. The poor have a peculiar relation to God; he openly and frequently professeth himself their especial friend, patron, and protector; he is much concerned in, and particularly chargeth his providence with their support. In effect therefore they shall surely be provided for, one way or other; (*The poor shall eat and be satisfied: God will save the afflicted people: The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and widow. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them:*) but out of goodness to us, he chooseth, (if it may be, we freely concurring therein,) and best liketh that it should be done by our hands; this conducing no less to our benefit than to theirs; we thereby having opportunity to shew our respect to himself, and to lay an engagement on him to do us good. God therefore lendeth the poor man his own name, and alloweth him to crave our succour for his sake. (When the poor man asketh us in God's name, or for God's sake, he doth not usurp or forge, he hath good authority, and a true ground for doing so:) God gives him credit from himself unto us for what he wants, and bids us charge what he receiveth on his own account; permitting us to reckon him obliged thereby, and to write him our debtor; engaging his own word and reputation duly to repay, fully to satisfy us. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, saith the Wise Man: and, *Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me*, saith our Saviour: and, *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister*, saith the Apostle. What therefore we give to the poor, God accepteth as an expression of kindness to him-

Ps. xxii. 26. xviii. 27. cxlvi. 9. Isa. xli. 17.

Prov. xix. 17.

Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

Heb. vi. 10.

self, being given to one of his friends and clients, in respect to him; he regards it as a testimony of friendly confidence in him, signifying that we have a good opinion of him, that we take him for able and willing to requite a good turn, that we dare take his word, and think our goods safe enough in his custody. But if we stop our ears, or shut our hands from the poor, God interprets it as a harsh repulse, and an heinous affront put upon himself: we doing it to one who bears his name, and wears his livery, (for the poor man's rags are badges of his relation unto God,) he thereby judges, that we have little good-will, little respect, little compassion toward himself: since we vouchsafe not to grant him so mean a favour, since we refuse at his request, and (as it were) in his need, to accommodate him with a small sum, he justly reputes it as an argument of unkindly diffidence in him, that we have sorry thoughts of him, deeming him no good correspondent, little valuing his word, suspecting his goodness, his truth, or his sufficiency.

2. We by practising those duties are just, by omitting them are very unjust toward God. For our goods, our wealth, and our estate are indeed none of them simply or properly our own, so that we have an absolute property in them, or an entire disposal of them: no, we are utterly incapable of such a right unto them, or power over them: God necessarily is the true and absolute proprietary of them. They are called the gifts of God: but we must not understand that God, by giving them to us, hath parted with his own right to them: they are deposited with us in trust, not alienated from him; they are committed to us as stewards, not transferred upon us as masters: they are so ours, that we have no authority to use them according to our will or fancy, but are obliged to manage them according to God's direction and order. He, by right immutable, is Lord paramount of all his creation; every thing unalienably belongs to him upon many accounts. He out of nothing made all things at first, and to every creature through each moment a new being is conferred by his preservative influence: originally therefore he is Lord of all things, and continually a

Eccles. v. 19. vi. 2.

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new title of dominion over every thing springeth up unto him: it is his always, because he always maketh it. We ourselves are naturally mere slaves and vassals to him: as we can never be our own, (masters of ourselves, of our lives, of our liberties,) so cannot we ever properly be owners of any thing; there are no possible means, by which we can acquire any absolute title to the least mite; the principal right to what we seem to get, according to all law and reason, accrueth to our master. All things about us, by which we live, with which we work and trade, the earth which supports and feeds us, and furnisheth us with all commodities, the air we breathe, the sun and stars which cherish our life, are all of them his, his productions and his possessions, subsisting by his pleasure, subject to his disposal. How then can any thing be ours? How can we say, with the foolish churl Nabal, *Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh, and give it?* Thine? O inconsiderate man! How camest thou by it? How dost thou hold it? Didst thou make it? Or dost thou preserve it? Canst thou claim any thing by nature? No: thou broughtest nothing with thee into the world; thou didst not bring thyself hither[h]. Canst thou challenge any thing to thyself from chance? No; for there is no such thing as chance, all things being guided and governed by God's providence. Dost thou conceive thy industry can entitle thee to any thing? Thou art mistaken; for all the wit and strength thou appliest, the head thou contrivest with, and the hands thou workest with, are God's; all the success thou findest did wholly depend on him, was altogether derived from him; all thy projects were vain, all thy labours would be fruitless, did not he assist and bless thee. Thou dost vainly and falsely *lift up thine heart, and forget the Lord thy God, whenas thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy silver and gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; if thou sayest in thy heart, My*

Ps. xxiv. 1. l. 12. lxxxix. 11. xcv. 5.

1 Sam. xxv. 11.

Deut. viii. 13, 14, 17, 18.

h Sed ais, Quid injustum est, si cum aliena non invadam, propria diligentius servem? O impudens dictum! propria dicis? quæ? ex quibus reconditis in hunc mundum detulisti? *Ambros.*

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power, and the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth. But thou must remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth. [——*Who am I,* saith David, *and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee; and of thine own have we given thee.* 1 Chron. xxix. 14.] Since then upon all scores every thing we have doth appertain to God, he may without any injury recal or resume whatever he pleaseth; and while he letteth any thing abide with us, we cannot justly use it otherwise than he hath appointed, we cannot duly apply it otherwise than to his interest and service[i]. God then having enjoined, that after we have satisfied our necessities, and supplied our reasonable occasions, we should employ the rest to the relief of our poor neighbours; that *if we have two* Luke iii. 11. *coats,* (one more than we need,) *we should impart one to him that hath none; if we have meat* abundant, that we *likewise* communicate to him that wants it[k]: God, by the poor man's voice, (or by his need and misery,) demanding his own from us, we are very unjust if we presume to withhold it; doubly unjust we are, both toward God, and toward our neighbour: we are unfaithful stewards, misapplying the goods of our Master, and crossing his order[l]: we are wrongful usurpers, detaining from our neighbour that which God hath allotted him; we are in the court of conscience; we shall appear at the bar of God's judgment no better than robbers, (under vizards of legal right and possession,) spoiling our poor brother of his goods; his, I say, by the very same title as any thing can be ours, by the free donation of God, fully and frequently expressed, as we have seen, in his holy word.

[i] Aliena rapere convincitur, qui ultra necessaria sibi retinere probatur. *Hieron.*

[k] Quicquid Deus plusquam opus est dederit, non nobis specialiter dedit, sed per nos aliis erogandum transmisit; quod si non dederimus, res alienas invasimus. *Aug. Serm.* 219. *de Temp.*

Proprium nemo dicat quod commune; plus quam sufficeret sumptui violenter obtentum est. *Ambros.*

[l] Σὺ δὲ ἁπ᾽ ἐρημίας, ἃ πρὸς οἰκονομίαν ἐδίξω, ταῦτα ἴδια ἑαυτῷ ποιούμενος. *Bas. M.*

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(He cannot take it away by violence or surreption against our will, but we are bound willingly to yield it up to him; to do that, were disorder in him: to refuse this, is wrong in us.) 'Tis the hungry man's bread which we hoard up in our barns, 'tis his meat on which we glut, and his drink which we guzzle[m]: 'tis the naked man's apparel which we shut up in our presses, or which we exorbitantly ruffle and flaunt in: 'tis the needy person's gold and silver which we closely hide in our chests, or spendidly, or put out to useless use. We are in thus holding, or thus spending, truly πλεονέκται, not only covetous, but wrongful, or havers of more than our own, against the will of the right owners; plainly violating that precept of Solo-

Prov. iii. 27.

mon; *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.* If we are ambitious of having a property in somewhat, or affect to call any thing our own, 'tis only by nobly giving that we can accomplish our desire; that will certainly appropriate our goods to our use and benefit: but from basely keeping, or vainly embezzling them, they become not our possession and enjoyment, but our theft and our bane [n]. (These things, spoken after the holy fathers, wise instructors in matters of piety, are to be understood with reasonable temperament, and practised with honest prudence. I cannot stand to discuss cases, and remove scruples; a pious charity will easily discern its due limits and measures, both declining perplexity, and not evading duty. The sum is, that justice towards God and man obligeth us not to suffer our poor brother to perish, or pine away for want, when we surfeit and swim in plenty, or not to see him lack necessaries, when we are well able to relieve him.)

3. Shewing bounty and mercy are the most proper and the principal expressions of our gratitude unto God; so that in omitting them, we are not only very unjust, but

[m] Nostrum est (pauperes clamant) quod effunditis; nobis crudeliter subtrahitur, quod inaniter expenditur. *Bern. Ep.* 42.

[n] Omne quod male possidetur alienum est: male autem possidet, qui male utitur. *August. Ep.* 54.

highly ingrateful. Innumerable are the benefits, favours, and mercies, (both common and private,) which God hath bestowed on us, and doth continually bestow: he incessantly showers down blessings on our heads; *he daily loadeth us with his benefits;* he perpetually *crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies:* all that we are, all that we have, all that we can hope for of good, is alone from his free bounty: our beings and lives, with all the conveniences and comforts of them, we entirely owe to him as to our Maker, our Preserver, our constant Benefactor: all the excellent privileges we enjoy, and all the glorious hopes we have as Christians, we also stand indebted for purely to his undeserved mercy and grace. And, *What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward us?* Shall we render him nothing? Shall we refuse him any thing? Shall we boggle at making returns so inconsiderable, in regard to what he hath done for us? What is a little gold, or silver, or brass, perhaps, which our poor neighbour craveth of us, in comparison to our life, our health, our reason; to all accommodations of our body, and all endowments of our mind? What are all the goods in the world to the love and favour of God, to the pardon of our sins, to the gifts of God's Spirit, to the dignity of being the children of God and heirs of salvation; to the being freed from extreme miseries, and made capable of eternal felicity? And doth not this unexpressible goodness, do not all these inestimable benefits, require some correspondent thankfulness? Are we not obliged, shall we not be willing to exhibit some real testimony thereof? And what other can we exhibit beside this? We cannot directly or immediately requite God, for he cannot so receive any thing from us; he is not capable of being himself enriched or exalted, of being anywise pleasured or bettered by us, who is in himself infinitely sufficient, glorious, joyful, and happy: *Our goodness extends not to him; a man cannot be profitable to his Maker.* All that we can do in this kind is thus indirectly, in the persons of his poor relations, to gratify him, imparting at his desire, and for his sake, somewhat of what he hath

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Ps. lxviii. 19. ciii. 4.

Ps. cxvi. 12.

Ps. xvi. 2. Job xxii. 2.

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bestowed on us upon them. Such a thankful return we owe unto God, not only for what he hath given us, but even for the capacity of giving to others; for that we are in the number of those who can afford relief, and who need not to demand it. Our very wealth and prosperous state should not seem to us so contemptible things, that we should be unwilling to render somewhat back in grateful resentment for them: the very act of giving is itself no mean benefit; (having so much of honour in it, so much of pleasure going with it, so much of reward following it;) we receive far more than we return in giving; for which therefore it is fit that we should return our gratitude, and consequently that we should perform these duties [o]. For indeed without this practice, no other expression of gratitude can be true in itself, or can be acceptable to God. We may seem abundantly to thank him in words; but a sparing hand gives the lie to the fullest mouth; we may spare our breath, if we keep back our substance; for all our praising God for his goodness, and blessing him with our lips, if we will do nothing for him, if we will not part with any thing for his sake, appears mere compliment; is, in truth, plain mockery, and vile hypocrisy.

4. Yea, which we may farther consider, all our devotion, severed from a disposition of practising these duties, is no less such; cannot have any true worth in it, shall not yield any good effect from it. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably disposed, what are they other than demonstrations of egregious impudence and folly? For how can we with any face presume to ask any thing from God, when we deny him requesting a small matter

[o] Δός τι Θεῷ χαριστήριον, ὅτι τῶν εὖ ποιεῖν δυναμένων ἐγένε, ἀλλ' ὁ τῶν εὖ παθεῖν δεομένων. *Naz.*

—τὸν φιλάνθρωπον ὑμνῆσαι δεσπότην, ὅτι τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις ἡμᾶς σωφρονίζει παθήμασι, καὶ οὐχ ἡμᾶς εἰς ἑτέρων παρέπεμψεν οἰκίας, ἀλλ' εἰς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἄλλους ἤγαγε θύρας. *Theod. Ep.* 30.

Εἰ δὲ μὴ νομίζεις λαμβάνειν μᾶλλον, ἢ διδόναι, μὴ παράσχῃς. *Chrysost.* tom. v. *Orat.* 54.

Nec enim homo Deo præstat beneficium in his quæ dederit, sed Deus his homini quæ acceperit. *Salvian.*

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from us? How can we with any reason expect any mercy from him, when we vouchsafe not to shew any mercy for his sake? Can we imagine that God will hearken unto, or mind our petitions, when we are deaf to his intreaties, and regardless of his desires? No; *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.* Prov. xxi. 13. 'Tis his declaration to such bold and unreasonable petitioners, *When you spread forth your hands, I will not hear you; when you make many prayers, I will not hear.* Isa. i. 15. No importunity, no frequency of prayers will move God in such a case; the needy man's cries and complaints will drown their noise; his sighs and groans will obstruct their passage, and stop the ears of God against them. Likewise all our semblances of repentance, all our corporal abstinences and austerities, if a kind and merciful disposition are wanting, what are they truly but presumptuous dallyings, or impertinent triflings with God? For do we not grossly collude with sin, when we restrain the sensual appetites of the body, but foment the soul's more unreasonable desires; when we curb our wanton flesh, and give licence to a base spirit? Do we not palpably baffle, when in respect to God we pretend to deny ourselves, yet upon urgent occasion allow him nothing? Do we not strangely prevaricate, when we would seem to appease God's anger, and purchase his favour by our submissions, yet refuse to do that which he declares most pleasing to him, and most necessary to those purposes? It is an ordinary thing for men thus to serve God, and thus to delude themselves: *I have known many*, saith St. Basil, *who have fasted, and prayed, and groaned, and expressed all kind of costless piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted* [p]. Such a cheap and easy piety, which costs us little or nothing, can surely not be worth much; and we must not conceit, that the all-wise God *(the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed,* as Anna sang, and who *weigheth the spirits* also, as the wise

Jam. v. 4. Eccles. iv. 4, 5, 6.

Τί δὲ κέρδος, σωφροσύνη μετὰ ἀπανθρωπίας; &c. *Chrys.* tom. v. Or. 55.

2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

1 Sam. ii. 3.

Prov. xvi. 2.

[p] Οἶδα πολλοὺς νηστεύοντας, προσευχομένους, στενάζοντας, πᾶσαν τὴν ἀδάπανον ἰυλάξειαν ἐνδεικνυμένους, ὀβολὸν δὲ ἵνα μὴ προϊτμένους τοῖς θλιβομένοις. *Bas. M. in Luc.* xii. 8.

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Man saith) will be cheated therewith, or take it for more than its just value. No; he hath expressly signified, that he hath *not chosen* such services, nor doth take any pleasure in them: he hath called them *vain and impertinent oblations;* not *sweet* or *acceptable*, but *abominable* and *troublesome* to him, such as he *cannot away with*, and *is weary to bear.* 'Tis *religious liberality* that doth prove us to be serious and earnest in other *religious performances;* which assures that we value matters of piety at a considerable rate; which gives a substance and solidity to our devotions; which sanctifies our fasts, and verifies our penances; which renders our praises real, and our prayers effectual; so that these being combined, we may reasonably expect acceptance and recompence; and in effect to hear that from God, which by him was returned to good Cornelius, *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

Isa. lviii. 5. i. 13, 14. Mic. vi. 6, 7. Jer. vi. 20. Acts x. 4.

5. The conscionable practice of these duties doth plainly spring from those good dispositions of mind regarding God, which are the original grounds and fountains of all true piety; and the neglect of them issueth from those vicious dispositions which have a peculiar inconsistency with piety, being destructive thereof in the very foundation and root. Faith in God is the fundamental grace upon which piety is grounded; love and fear of God are the radical principles from which it grows: all which as the charitable man discovers in his practice, so they are apparently banished from the heart of the illiberal and unmerciful person.

As for faith, the good man, in shewing bounty, exerciseth the chief act thereof; he freely parteth with his goods, because he trusteth on God's providence more than them, and believeth God more ready to help him, than any creature can do, in his need; because he is persuaded that God is most good and benign, so as never to suffer him to be oppressed with want; because he taketh God to be just and faithful, who, having charged him *to care for nothing*, but *to cast his care and burden upon the Lord*, having promised to *care for him*, to *sustain him*,

Mat. vi. 25. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7. Ps. lv. 22. Heb. xiii. 5.

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never to *leave or forsake him*, having also engaged himself to repay and recompense him for what he giveth to his poor neighbour, will not fail to make good his word; because he thinks God abundantly solvent, and himself never the poorer for laying out in his behalf; because, in short, he is content to live in a dependence upon God, and at his disposal. It is mentioned by the Apostle to the Hebrews, as a special instance of a resolute and constant faith in the first Christians, that *they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.* Heb. x. 34. He that not forcibly by the violent rapacity of others, but voluntarily by his own free resignation for the service of God, deliver-eth them up with the same alacrity, opinion, and hope, thereby demonstrates the same faith. But the *gripple wretch*, who will bestow nothing on his poor brother or God's sake, is evidently an infidel, having none at all, or very heathenish conceits of God. He must be either a mere Atheist, disbelieving the existence of God; or an Epicurean, in his heart denying God's providence over human affairs [q]; (for did he conceive God to have any regard unto, or any influence over what passes here, how could he be afraid of wanting upon this score? how could he repose any confidence in these possessions? how could he think himself secure in such a neglect or defiance of God?) or he must be exceedingly profane, entertaining most dishonourable and injurious apprehensions of God. He cannot but imagine God very unkind, not only in neglecting men that want his help, but in making them to suffer for spending upon his account; very unjust, in not repaying what he borrows; very unfaithful, in breaking his word; very deceitful, in gulling us of our things by fair promises of restitution and requital: or he must apprehend God forgetful of what we do, and himself says; or that he is needy and impotent, not having wherewith to make satisfaction, not being able to make good what

[q] Ὁ γὰρ τοιοῦτος οὐ τῷ Θεῷ πεπίστευκεν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ χρυσίῳ, θεὸν τοῦτο ἡγούμενος, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ πεποιθώς. *Const. Apost.* iv. 4.

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he pretends. He must in his conceit debase God even beneath the vilest creatures, thinking a senseless lump of clay more apt in his need to help him, than God can be with all his power and care; supposing his money safer in his own coffers than in God's hands, and that iron bars will guard it more surely than divine protection; esteeming his neighbour's bond for much better security than God's word, and that a mortal man is far more able or more true than the eternal God. He certainly cannot think one word true that God says, being loth to trust him for a penny, for a piece of bread, or for an old garment. All God's promises of recompence, and threatenings of punishment, he takes for idle fictions: heaven and hell are but Utopias in his conceit; the joys of one, offered to the charitable person, are but pleasant fancies; the torments of the other, denounced to the uncharitable, but fearful dreams. All other things are but names; money and lands are the only real things unto him; all the happiness he can conceive or wish is contained in bags and barns; these are the sole points of his faith, and objects of his confidence. *He makes gold his hope, and saith to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence. He rejoices because his wealth is great, and because his hand hath gotten much*, as Job speaketh, disclaiming that practice in himself, and tacitly charging it on the persons we speak of. He doth, in fine, affect a total independency upon God, and cares to have no dealing with him; he would trust to himself, and live on his own estate: so gross infidelity, and horrible profaneness of mind, lie couched under this sort of vices.

Hab. ii. 9.

Job xxxi. 24, 25.

As for the love of God, the liberal man declares it, in that for God's sake he is willing to part with any thing, that he values God's love and favour above all other goods; that he deems himself rich and happy enough in the enjoyment of God. But, *Who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* saith St. John: that is, it is impossible he should love God; 'tis a vain conceit to think he does; 'tis a frivolous

1 John iii. 17.

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thing for him to pretend it. For how possibly can he bear in his heart any affection to God, who will not for his sake, and at his instance, part with a little worthless trash, and dirty pelf? who prizes so inconsiderable matters beyond God's favour and friendship? who prefers the keeping of his wealth before the enjoyment of God; and chooses rather certainly to quit his whole interest in God, than to adventure a small parcel of his estate with God? His practice indeed sufficiently discovers, that his hard and stupid heart is uncapable of any love, except of a corrupt, inordinate, and fond love or dotage toward himself, since so present and sensible objects cannot affect him. *He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?* 1 John iv. 20.

And as to the fear and reverence of God, the liberal man expresses it in submission to God's commands, although with his own present seeming diminution and loss; in preferring the discharging of his conscience before the retaining his money; in casting overboard his temporal goods, that he may secure his spiritual and eternal concernments. He can say (his practice attesting to his profession) with David, *I love thy commandments above gold;* and, *The law of thy mouth is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver:* he shews that he is *a man of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness;* which dispositions, as having much affinity and connection, are well joined together by Jethro. But the uncharitable man can have little fear of God before his eyes: since the commands of God have no efficacy on his conscience; since he dreads not the effects of divine power and justice, provoked by his disobedience; since he deems an imaginary danger of want from giving, worse than a certain commission of sin in withholding; and is more afraid of penury here, than of damnation hereafter. Ps. cxix. 127. Exod. xviii. 21.

The truth is, the covetous or illiberal man is therefore uncapable of being truly pious, because his heart is possessed with vain devotion toward somewhat beside God, which in effect is his sole divinity; he is justly styled an idolater, for that he directs and employs the chief affections of his mind Col. iii. 5. Eph. v. 5.

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upon an idol of clay, which he loves with all his heart and all his soul, which he entirely confides in, which he esteems and worships above all things. It is Mammon, which of all the competitors and antagonists of God, invading God's right, and usurping his place, is (as our Lord intimates) the most dangerous, and desperately repugnant: where he becomes predominant, true religion is quite excluded; *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* Other vicious inclinations combat reason, and often baffle it, but seldom so vanquish it, as that a man doth approve or applaud himself in his miscarriages: but the covetous humour seizeth on our reason itself, and seateth itself therein; inducing it to favour and countenance what is done amiss. The voluptuous man is swayed by the violence of his appetite; but the covetous is seduced by the dictate of his judgment: he therefore scrapes and hoards, and lets go nothing, because he esteems wealth the best thing in the world, and then judges himself most wise, when he is most base. *Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom,* saith Solomon; intimating the judgment such persons are wont to make of their riches: whence, of all dispositions opposite to piety, this is the most pernicious. But farther,

Matt. vi. 24.

Prov. xxiii. 4.

6. Let us consider, that nothing is more conformable to God's nature, or renders us more like to him, than beneficence and mercy; and that consequently nothing can be more grateful to him: that nothing is more disagreeable and contrary to the essential disposition of God, than illiberality and unmercifulness; and therefore that nothing can be more distasteful to him. What is any being in the world, but an afflux of his bounty, and an argument of his liberality? Look every where about nature, consider the whole tenor of Providence, survey all the works, and scan all the actions of God, you will find them all conspiring in attestation to those sweet characters and elogies which the holy Scripture ascribeth to God, representing him to be *merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness;* to be *sorry for evil,* (incident to, or inflicted upon any creature,) to *delight in mercy,* to

Exod. xxxiv. 6. Joel ii. 13. Mic. vii. 18.

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wait that he may be gracious; styling him the *God of love, of peace, of hope, of patience, of all grace, and of all consolation, the Father of pities, rich in mercy, and full of bowels;* affirming of him, and by manifold evidences demonstrating, that he is *benign even unto the ungrateful and evil;* that *he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Nature, I say, Providence, and Revelation, do all concur in testifying this, that there is nothing in God so peculiarly admirable, nothing, as it were, so godlike, that is, so highly venerable and amiable, as to do good and shew mercy [r]. We, therefore, by liberal communication to the needy, do most approach to the nature of God, and most exactly imitate his practice; acquiring to ourselves thereby somewhat of divinity, and becoming little gods to our neighbour. *Nothing*, saith St. Chrysostom, *maketh us so near equal to God as beneficence* [s]: and, *Be*, saith St. Gregory Nazianzen, *a god to the unfortunate, imitating the mercy of God; for a man hath nothing of God so much as to do good* [t]. That such hath always been the common apprehension of men, the practice of all times sheweth, in that men have been ever apt to place their benefactors among their gods, deferring that love and veneration unto them in degree, which in perfection do appertain to the supreme Benefactor [u]. *Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful;* so our Saviour proposeth God's mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulness: implying it also to be a good sign, declaring us the children of God, the genuine offspring of the all-good and all-merciful Father; yea, that it even renders and consti-

Isa. xxx. 18. Rom. xv. 5, 33. Eph. ii. 4. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. i. 3. Jam. v. 11. 1 Pet. v. 10. Luke vi. 35. Ps. cxlv. 9.

Deus est mortali, juvare mortalem. *Plin. N. H.* l. ii.

Luke vi. 35, 36.

[r] Θεοῦ πολλῶν ὄντων ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν οὕτως ὡς τὸ πάντας εὐεργετεῖν ἰδιώτατον. *Naz. Orat.* 26.

[s] Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἴσα; Θεῷ ποιεῖ, ὡς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν. *Chrys. in Matt. Orat.* 35.

[t] Γίνου τῷ ἀτυχοῦντι Θεὸς, τὸν ἔλεον τοῦ Θεοῦ μιμησάμενος· οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ὡς τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἀνθρώπος ἔχει Θεοῦ. *Naz. Or.* 16.

[u] Hic est vetustissimus referendi bene merentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus adscribantur. *Plin.* ii. 7.

Suscepit vita hominum, consuetudoque communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cœlum fama ac voluntate tollerent. *Cic. de N. D.* lib. ii.

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tutes us such, (we thereby coming most truly to represent, and most nearly to resemble him.) Our Lord farther teaches us, saying, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to those that hate you——that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.* And they who thus are God's children must consequently be very dear to him, and most gracious in his sight; he cannot but greatly like and love himself (the best of himself) in them; he cannot but cherish and treat them well, who are the fairest and truest images of himself; no spectacle can be so pleasant to him, as to see us in our practice to act himself, doing good to one another; *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, putting on bowels of mercies and kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave us;* being *followers of God as dear children, and walking in love, even as Christ also loved us.* But on the other side, there is not in nature any thing so remotely distant from God, or so extremely opposite to him, as a greedy and griping niggard: hell is scarce so contrary to heaven, as such a man's disposition to the nature of God: for 'tis *goodness* which sits gloriously triumphant at the top of heaven; and *uncharitableness* lieth miserably grovelling under the bottom of hell: heaven descends from the one, as its principal cause; hell is built on the other, as its main foundation: as the one approximates the blessed angels to God, and beatifies them; so the other removeth the cursed fiends to such a distance from God and happiness: not to wish, not to do any good, is that which renders them both so bad, and so wretched; and whoever in his conditions is so like to them, and in his practice so agrees with them, cannot but also be very odious to God, and extremely unhappy. God cannot but abhor so base a degeneration from his likeness in those who by nature are his children, and should be farther such according to his gracious design; neither can any thing more offend his eyes, than seeing them to use one another unkindly. So that if obtaining the certain favour of the great God, with all the benefits attending it,

Matt. v. 44, 45.

Col. iii. 12, 13.

Eph. v. 1, 2.

seem considerable to us; or if we think it advisable to shun his displeasure, with its sad effects; it concerns us to practise these duties. So I conclude that sort of considerations, enforcing these duties, which more immediately regard God. SERM. XXXI.

Farther, before we deny our relief to our poor neighbour, let us with the eyes of our mind look on him, and attentively consider who he is, what he is in himself, and what he is in relation unto us. [*The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it*, Prov. xxix. 7. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor*, Psal. xli. 1.] III. Head of Discourse.

1. He whose need craves our bounty, whose misery demands our mercy, what is he? He is not truly so mean and sorry a thing, as the disguise of misfortune, under which he appears, doth represent him. He who looks so deformedly and dismally, who to outward sight is so ill bestead, and so pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory. He within himself containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal soul, and an intelligent mind, by which he nearly resembleth God himself, and is comparable to angels: he invisibly is owner of endowments, rendering him capable of the greatest and best things. What are money and lands? What are silk and fine linen? What are horses and hounds, in comparison to reason, to wisdom, to virtue, to religion, which he hath, or (in despite of all misfortune) he may have if he please? He whom you behold so dejectedly sneaking, in so despicable a garb, so destitute of all convenience and comfort, (lying in the dust, naked, or clad with rags, meagre with hunger or pain,) he comes of a most high and heavenly extraction: he was born a prince, the son of the greatest King eternal; he can truly call the sovereign Lord of all the world his father, having derived his soul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himself. (In this, *The rich and poor*, as the Wise Man saith, *do meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.*) That same forlorn wretch, whom we are so apt to despise and trample upon, was framed and consti- Prov. xxii. 2. Gen. i. 28.

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tuted lord of the visible world; had all the goodly brightnesses of heaven, and all the costly furnitures of earth, created to serve him. (*Thou madest him*, saith the Psalmist of man, *to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*) Yea, he was made an inhabitant of paradise, and possessor of felicities superlative; had immortal life and endless joy in his hand, did enjoy the entire favour and friendship of the Most High. Such in worth of nature and nobleness of birth he is, as a man; and highly more considerable he is, as a Christian. For, as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath so regarded and prized him, as for his sake to descend from heaven, to clothe himself with flesh, to assume the form of a servant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greatest inconveniences, infirmities, wants, and disgraces, the most grievous troubles and most sharp pains incident to mortal nature. God hath adopted him to be his child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him brother: he is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a free denizen of the heavenly city, an heir of salvation, and candidate of eternal glory. The greatest and richest personage is not capable of better privileges than God hath granted him, or of higher preferments than God hath designed him to. He equally with the mightiest prince is the object of God's especial providence and grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; who, as good Elihu saith, *accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands.* In fine, this poor creature whom thou seest is a man and a Christian, thine equal, whoever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition: I say not, in the uncertain and unstable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly state, which is very inconsiderable; but in gifts vastly more precious, in title to an estate infinitely more rich and excellent[x]. Yea, if thou

Ps. viii. 6.

Job xxxiv. 19.

[x] ——ἐννόησον, ὅτι ὁμοίως σοι ἐλεύθερός ἐστι, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς σοι κοινωνεῖ εὐγενείας, καὶ πάντα σοι κοινὰ κέκτηται. *Chrys. in Heb. Orat.* 2.

Οἱ τοίνυν ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς τοσαύτην ἔχοντες ἰσοτιμίαν, πόθεν μίγα φρο-

art vain and proud, be sober and humble; he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in real wealth surpassing thee: for, *Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.* SERM. XXXI. Eccles. x. 24. Prov. xxviii. 6.

2. That distinction which thou standest upon, and which seemeth so vast between thy poor neighbour and thee, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not anywise natural, or according to primitive design: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, so were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all constituted in a most prosperous and plentiful estate; all things at first were promiscuously exposed to the use and enjoyment of all, every one from the common stock assuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private interest in things (together with sicknesses and pains, together with all other infelicities and inconveniences) were the by-blows of our fall [y]: sin introduced these degrees and distances; it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and inclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendered so much strife among men, and created so much mischief in the world: these preternatural distinctions were, I say, brooded by our fault, and are in great part fostered and maintained thereby; for were we generally so good, so just, so charitable as we should be, they could hardly subsist, especially in that measure they do [z]. God indeed (for promot-

νεῖτε; ὅτι ὁ θεῖνα πλούσιος, καὶ ὁ θεῖνα ἰσχυρός. *Chrys. in Eph.* iv. 4. *in Joh. Orat.* 15.

Ἡ τῶ πνεύματος χάρις ὁμοτίμως ποιεῖ τὰς ὁμοφρονας. *Naz. Or.* 23.

[y] Πενία καὶ πλοῦτος, ἐλευθερία τι, ἣν φαμὲν, καὶ δουλεία, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὀνομάτων, ὕστερον ἐπεισῆλθον τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ ἀῤῥωστήματα τῇ κακίᾳ συνεπίσοντα, κἀκείνης ὄντα ἐπινοήματα. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 6.

[z] Τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν, καὶ τὸ σὸν, τοῦτο τὸ ψυχρὸν ῥῆμα, καὶ μυρίας πολέμους εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην εἰσαγαγὸν, &c. *Chrys.* tom. v. *λογ. νδ'.* et in Act. ii. 47.

Natura omnia omnibus in commune profudit; sic enim Deus generari jussit omnia, ut pastus omnibus communis esset, et terra foret omnium quædam communis possessio. Natura igitur jus commune generavit, usurpatio jus fecit privatum. *Amb. Offic.* i. 28.

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ing some good ends, and for prevention of some mischiefs, apt to spring from our ill-nature in this our lapsed state; particularly to prevent the strife and disorder which scrambling would cause among men, presuming on equal right and parity of force) doth suffer them in some manner to continue, and enjoins us a contented submission to them: but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that all the world is so cantonized among some few, that the rest have no share therein. No; every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision made for his tolerable subsistence. God hath brought no man hither to be necessarily starved, or pinched with extreme want; but hath assigned to every one a child's portion, in some fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right, or by humble request, which according to conscience ought to have effect [a]. No man therefore is allowed to detain, or to destroy superfluously, what another man apparently wants; but is obliged to impart it to him; so that rich men are indeed but the treasurers, the stewards, the caterers of God for the rest of men, having a strict charge to *dispense unto every one his meat in due season*, and no just privilege to withhold it from any: the honour of distribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reserved to the poor, as a provision for their necessity. Thus hath God wisely projected, that all his children should both effectually and quietly be provided for, and that none of them should be oppressed with penury; so that, as St. Paul hath it, *one man's abundance shall supply another man's want, that there may be an equality:* for

Matt. xxiv. 45. Luke xii. 42.

2 Cor. viii. 14.

Καὶ γὰρ εἰ μετὰ ἀκριβείας τοῦτο ἐφυλάττετο, ὁ δοῦλος, ἐκ ἐλεύθερος ἦν, ἐκ ἄρχων, οὐκ ἀρχόμενος, ὁ πλούσιος, ὁ πένης, ὁ μικρὸς, ὁ μέγας, ὁ διάβολος ἂν ἐγνώσθη ποτέ. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Orat.* 32.

Ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἐν θεάτρῳ θεὰν καταλαβὼν, εἶτα εἰσέρχοι τὰς ἐπεισιόντας ἴδιον ἑαυτῷ κρίνων τὸ κοινὸν πᾶσι κατὰ τὴν χρῆσιν προκείμενον· τοιοῦτοί εἰσι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι· τὰ κοινὰ προκατάσχοντες ἰδιοποιοῦνται διὰ τὴν πρόληψιν. *Basil. M.*

[a] Incassum se innocentes putant, qui commune Dei munus sibi privatum vindicant. *Greg. M.*

since no man can enjoy more than he needs, and every man should have so much as he needs, there can be really no great inequality among men; the distinction will scarce remain otherwhere than in fancy. What the philosopher said of himself, *What I have is so mine, that it is every man's*, is according to the practice of each man, who is truly and in due measure charitable; whereby that seemingly enormous [b] discrimination among men is well moderated, and the equity of Divine Providence is vindicated. But he that ravenously grasps for more than he can well use, and gripes it fast into his clutches, so that the needy in their distress cannot come by it, doth pervert that equity which God hath established in things, defeats his good intention, (so far as he can,) and brings a scandal on his providence: and so doing is highly both injurious and impious.

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Ego meo sic habeo, ut omnium sint. *Demetrius apud Sen. de Ben.* vii. 10.

3. It was also (which we should consider) even one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by God's providence, that as some men's industry and patience might be exercised by their poverty, so other men by their wealth should have ability of practising justice and charity; that so both rich and poor might thence become capable of recompences, suitable to the worth of such virtuous performances. *Why art thou rich*, saith St. Basil, *and he poor? Surely for this; that thou mayest attain the reward of benignity, and faithful dispensation; and that he might be honoured with the great prize of patience* [c]. God in making thee rich, would have thee to be a double benefactor, not only to thy poor neighbour, but also to thyself, whilst thou bestowest relief on him, purchasing a reward to thyself. God also by this order of things

[b] Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν, οὐδὲν περισσότερον κέκτηται τοῦ πλησίου. *Basil. M.*

[c] Διά τι σὺ μὲν πλουτεῖς, ἐκεῖνος δὲ πένεται; ἢ πάντως ἵνα σὺ χρηστότητος καὶ πιστῆς οἰκονομίας μισθὸν ὑποδέξῃ, κἀκεῖνος τοῖς μεγαλοις ἄθλοις τῆς ὑπομονῆς τιμηθῇ. *Basil. M.*

Πλοῦτον ἢ πενίαν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διένειμεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός τε καὶ πρύτανις οὐκ ἀδίκῳ ψήφῳ χρησάμενος, ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν ὠφελείας τοῖς πλουσίοις παρέχων τῶν πενήτων τὴν ἔνδειαν. *Theod. Epist.* 23.

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designs, that a charitable intercourse should be maintained among men, mutually pleasant and beneficial; the rich kindly obliging the poor, and the poor gratefully serving the rich. Wherefore by neglecting these duties we unadvisedly cross the good purpose of God toward us, depriving ourselves of the chief advantages our wealth may afford.

4. We should also do well to consider, that a poor man, even as such, is not to be disregarded, and that poverty itself is no such contemptible thing as we may be prone to imagine. There are considerations which may qualify poverty even to dispute the place with wealth, and to claim precedence to it. If the world vulgarly doth account and call the rich man happy, a better Author hath pronounced the poor man such: *Blessed are the poor*, doth march in the van of the beatitudes; and a reason goeth along therewith, which asserteth its right to the place, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* for that they are not only in an equal capacity as men, but in a nearer disposition as poor, to the acquisition of that blissful state; for that poverty (the mistress of sobriety and honest industry, the mother of humility and patience, the nurse of all virtue) renders men more willing to go, and more expedite in the way toward heaven: by it also we conform to the Son of God himself, the heir of eternal majesty, the Saviour of the world, *who for our sake became poor*, (δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, for our sake became a beggar,) *that we through his poverty* (or beggary) *might become rich:* he willingly chose, he especially dignified and sanctified that depth of poverty which we so proudly slight and loathe. The greatest princes and potentates in the world, the most wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor beggar had been irrecoverably miserable: to poverty it is, that every one of us doth owe all the possibility there is, all the hopes we can have of our salvation; and shall we then ingratefully requite it with scorn, or with pitiless neglect? Shall we presume, in the person of any poor man, to abhor or contemn the very poor, but most holy and most happy Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer? No; if we will

Luke vi. 20.

2 Cor. viii. 9.

Dedignatur aliquis paupertatem, cujus tam claræ imagines sunt? *Sen. Consol. ad Helv.* 12.

do poverty right, we must rather, for his dear sake and memory, defer an especial respect and veneration thereto.

5. Thus a due reflection on the poor man himself, his nature and state, will induce us to succour. But let us also consider him as related unto ourselves: every such person is our near kinsman, is our brother, is by indissoluble bands of cognation in blood, and agreement in nature, knit and united to us. We are all but several streams issuing from one source, several sprigs sprouting from one stock; *one blood*, derived through several channels; one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction multiplied or dilated into several times and places. We are all fashioned according to the same original idea, resembling God, our common father; we are all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; we all conspire in the same essential ingredients of our constitution, and in the more notable adjuncts thereof; it is only some inconsiderable accidents (such as age, place, figure, stature, colour, garb) which diversify and distinguish us; in which, according to successions of time and chance, we commonly no less differ from ourselves, than we do at present from them: so that in effect and reasonable esteem, every man is not only our brother, but (as Aristotle saith of a friend) ἄλλος; αὐτὸς, *another one's self;* is not only our most lively image, but in a manner our very substance; another ourself, under a small variation of present circumstances: the most of distinction between us and our poor neighbour consists in exterior show, in moveable attire, in casual appendages to the nature of man; so that really when we use him well, we are kind to ourselves; when we yield him courteous regard, we bear respect to our own nature; when we feed and comfort him, we do sustain and cherish a member of our own body [d].

Acts xvii. 26.

[d] Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debetur. *Aug. Ep.* 121.

Οἰκεῖον πᾶς ἀνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον. *Arist.*

Ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις παθήσι διαπεινιτέον τὸ συγγενές, ἐ ὁμοδυλον. *Greg. Naz.*

Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

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But when we are cruel or harsh to him, we abuse ourselves; when we scorn him, we lay disparagement and disgrace on mankind itself; when we withhold succour or sustenance from him, we do, as the Prophet speaketh, *hide ourselves from our own flesh;* we starve a part of our own body, and wither a branch of our stock; immoderate selfishness so blindeth us, that we oversee and forget ourselves: it is in this as it is in other good senses, true what the Wise Man saith, *The merciful man doth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.*

Isa. lviii. 7.

Prov. xi. 17.

6. Farther, as the poor man is so nearly allied to us by society of human nature, so he is more strictly joined to us by the bands of spiritual consanguinity. All Christians (high and low, rich and poor) are children of the same heavenly Father, spring from the same incorruptible seed, are regenerated to the same lively hope, are coheirs of the same heavenly inheritance; are all members of one body, (*members*, saith St. Paul, *one of another*,) and animated by one holy Spirit: which relation, as it is the most noble and most close that can be, so it should breed the greatest endearments, and should express itself in correspondent effects; it should render us full of affection and sympathy one toward another; it should make us to tender the needs, and feel the sufferings of any Christian as our own; it should dispose us freely to communicate whatever we have, how precious soever, to any of our brethren; this holy friendship should establish a charitable equality and communion among us, both in point of honour and of estate; for since all things considerable are common unto us, since we are all purchased and purified by the same precious blood, since we all partake of the same precious faith, of the same high calling, of the same honourable privileges, of the same glorious promises and hopes; since we all have the same Lord and Saviour; why should these secular trifles be so private and particular among us? Why should not so huge a parity in those only valuable things not wholly (I say, not in worldly state or outward appearances, such as the preservation of order in secular affairs requireth, but) in our opinion and

Rom. xii. 5. Are all one. Gal. iii. 28. Πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. *Chrys. in Joh. Or.* 15. Φίλων γὰρ δεῖν ἴδιον, οἵτινες φίλοι ὀρθῶς πεφύκασι, ἀλλὰ κοινὰ χρήματα. *Eurip. Androm.*

affection extinguish that slight distinction of *rich* and *poor*, in concernments temporal? How can we slight so noble, so great a personage as a Christian, for wanting a little dross? How can we deem ourselves much his superior, upon so petty an advantage, for having that which is not worth speaking or thinking of, in comparison to what he enjoyeth? Our Lord himself is not ashamed to call the least among us his brother and his friend: and shall we then disdain to yield to such an one the regard and treatment suitable to such a quality? Shall we not honour any brother of our Lord? Shall we not be civil and kind to any friend of his? If we do not, how can we pretend to bear any true respect or affection unto himself? It is his express precept, that the greatest among us should, in imitation of his most humble and charitable self, be ready to serve the meanest; and that we should *in honour prefer one another*, and *in lowliness of mind esteem others better than ourselves*, are apostolical rules, extending indifferently to rich and poor, which are plainly violated by disregarding the poor. Yea, this relation should, according to St. John's doctrine, dispose us not only freely to impart these temporal goods, but even, if occasion be, willingly to expose our very lives for our brethren: *Hereby*, saith, he, *we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.* How greatly then are they deficient from their duty, how little in truth are they Christians, who are unwilling to part with the very superfluities and excrements of their fortune for the relief of a poor Christian! Thus considering our brother, may breed in us charitable dispositions toward him, and induce us to the practice of these duties.

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Col. iii. 11.

Heb. ii. 11 Matth. xxv. 40. Joh. xv. 14.

Matt. xx. 26.

Rom. xii. 10. Phil. ii. 3.

1 John iii. 16.

Moreover, if we reflect upon ourselves, and consider either our nature, or our state here, we cannot but observe many strong engagements to the same practice.

IV. Head of Discourse.

1. The very constitution, frame, and temper of our nature directeth and inclineth us thereto; whence, by observing those duties, we observe our own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the best perfection it is capable

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of; by neglecting them, we thwart, we impair, we debase the same——*hæc nostri pars optima sensus;* the best of our natural inclinations (those sacred relics of God's image originally stamped on our minds) do sensibly prompt, and vehemently urge us to mercy and pity: the very same bowels, which in our own want do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide for its relief, do also grievously resent the distresses of another, admonishing us thereby, and provoking us to yield him succour. Such is the natural sympathy between men, (discernible in all, but appearing most vigorous in the best natures,) that we cannot see, cannot hear of, yea, can hardly imagine the calamities of other men, without being somewhat disturbed and afflicted ourselves. As also nature, to the acts requisite toward preservation of our life, hath annexed a sensible pleasure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them: so hath she made the communication of benefits to others to be accompanied with a very delicious relish upon the mind of him that practises it; nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and savoury delight than beneficence. A man may be virtuously voluptuous, and a laudable epicure by doing much good; for to receive good, even in the judgment of Epicurus himself, (the great patron of pleasure,) is nowise so pleasant as to do it[e]: God and nature therefore within us do solicit the poor man's case: even our own ease and satisfaction demand from us compassion and kindness towards him; by exercising them, we hearken to nature's wise disciplines, and comply with her kindly instincts: we cherish good humour, and sweeten our complexion; so ennobling our minds, we become not only more like to God, but more perfectly men: by the contrary practice we rebel against the laws, and pervert the due course of our nature; we do weaken, corrupt, and stifle that which is best in us; we harden and stupify our souls; so monstrously degenerating from the perfection of our kind, and

Juven. Sat. xv. 133.

— mutuus ut nos Affectus petere auxilium, et præstare juberet. *Juven.* xv. 149.

Φιλόπτωχον ἡ συμπαθὴς τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος. *Arch. ad Mon.* 852.

[e] Ἐπίκυρος τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν τὲ εὖ πάσχειν οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡδιον εἶναι φησίν. *Plut. de Philos. conv. cum Princ.*

becoming rather like savage beasts than sociable men; yea somewhat worse perhaps than many beasts; for commonly brutes will combine to the succour of one another, they will defend and help those of the same kind. SERM. XXXI.

2. And if the sensitive part within us doth suggest so much, the rational dictates more unto us: that heavenly faculty, having capacities so wide, and so mighty energies, was surely not created to serve mean or narrow designs; it was not given us to scrape eternally in earth, or to amass heaps of clay for private enjoyment; for the service of one puisne creature, for the sustenance or satisfaction of a single carcase: it is much below an intelligent person to weary himself with servile toils, and distract his mind with ignoble cares, for concernments so low and scanty: but to regard and pursue the common good of men; to dispense, advise, and aid, where need requires; to diffuse its virtue all about in beneficial effects; these are operations worthy of reason, these are employments congruous to the native excellency of that divine power implanted in us; such performances declare indeed what a man is, whence he sprang, and whither he tends.

3. Farther, examining ourselves, we may also observe, that we are in reality, what our poor neighbour appears to be, in many respects no less indigent and impotent than he: we no less, yea, far more, for our subsistence depend upon the arbitrary power of another, than he seemeth to rely upon ours. We as defectible creatures do continually want support; we as grievous sinners do always need mercy; every moment we are contracting huge debts, far beyond our ability to discharge; debts of gratitude for benefits received, debts of guilt for offences committed; we therefore perpetually stand obliged to be craving for mercy and relief at the gates of heaven. We all, from prince to peasant, live merely upon alms, and are most really in condition beggars; *to pray always*, is a duty incumbent on us from the condition of our nature, as well as by the command of God. Such a likeness in state should therefore dispose us to succour our fellows, and, δανείζειν Θεῷ ἔλεον ἐλέᾳ χρήζοντας, *to lend mercy to God*, Greg. Naz.

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who need mercy from him, as the good Father speaketh. We should, as the Apostle advises and argues, *remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body*; as being companions in necessity, or subject to the like distress. If we daily receive mercy and relief, yet, unmindful of our obligation to God, refuse them to others, shall we not deserve to hear that dreadful exprobration, *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?*

Heb. xiii. 3.

Matt. xviii. 32, 33.

"Ομως δ' ἔνεστι τοῖσιν εὖ σκοπεῖν νοις ταρβεῖν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα μὴ σφαλῇ ποτέ. *Soph. in Trachin.*

4. The great incertainty and instability of our condition doth also require our consideration. We, that now flourish in a fair and full estate, may soon be in the case of that poor creature, who now sues for our relief; we, that this day enjoy the wealth of Job, may the morrow need his patience: there are Sabeans, which may come and drive away our cattle; there are tempests, which may arise and smite down our houses; there is a fire of God, which may fall from heaven and consume our substance; a messenger of all these mischiefs may, for all we know, be presently at our doors; it happened so to a better man than we, as unexpectedly, and with as small ground to fear it, as it can arrive to us: all our wealth is surrounded with dangers, and exposed to casualties innumerable: violence may snatch it from us, treachery may cheat us of it; mischance may seize thereon, a secret moth may devour it; the wisdom of Providence for our trial, or its justice for our punishment, may bereave us thereof; its own light and fluid nature (if no other accountable causes were apparent) might easily serve to waft it from us; for *Riches*, saith the Wise Man, *make themselves wings*, (they, it seems, do need no help for that,) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven:* that is, of their own accord they do swiftly convey themselves away out of our sight, and beyond our reach; they are but wind: *What profit*, says the Preacher, *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* For wind, that is, for a thing which can nowise be fixed or settled in one corner; which, therefore, it is a vanity to

Prov. xxiii. 5.

Eccles. v. 16.

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conceive that we can surely appropriate, or long retain. How then can we think to stand firm upon a place so slippery? how can we build any confidence on a bottom so loose and brittle? how can we suffer our minds to be swelled up like bubbles with vain conceit, by the breath of such things, more fleeting and vertiginous than any air? against the precepts of the wisest and best men: *If riches increase,* saith the Psalmist, *set not your heart on them: Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* saith the Wise Man: (that is, wilt thou regard that which is so transitory and evanid, that it hardly may be deemed real; which we can scarce look on, before it is gone?) And, *Charge them,* saith St. Paul, *that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches:* (ἐπὶ πλούτῳ ἀδηλότητι, in the obscurity or inevidence of riches; things, which we can never plainly discern how long we shall keep them, how much we can enjoy them:) what should make us unwilling, with certain advantages to ourselves, freely to let that go, which presently without our leave may forsake us? How can we reasonably judge our case much different from that of the poorest body, whenas in a trice we may perhaps change places and persons; when, the scene turning, he may be advanced unto our wealth, we may be depressed into his want[f]? Since every age yieldeth instances of some Crœsus, some Polycrates, some Pompey, some Job, some Nebuchodonosor, who within a small compass of time doth appear to all men the object both of admiration and pity, is to the less wise the mark both of envy and scorn[g]; seeing every day presenteth unexpected vicissitudes, the sea of human affairs continually ebbing and flowing, now rolling on this, now on the other shore, its restless waves of profit and credit; since especially there is a God, who arbitrarily disposeth things, and with a turn of his hand

Ps. lxii. 10. Prov. xxiii. 5.

[f] Καὶ γὰρ ἰσχάτης ἀνοίας ἂν εἴη ὢν καὶ ἄκοντες ἐξίστασθαι μέλλομεν ἑτέροις, τούτων μὴ μεταδοῦναι ἑκόντας τοῖς δεομένοις. *Chrys.* tom. v. *Orat.* 55.

[g] Sejanus—quo die illum Senatus deduxerat, populus in frusta divisit. *Sen. de Tranq.* ii.

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changeth the state of men; who, as the Scripture saith, *maketh rich and poor, bringeth low, and lifteth up; poureth contempt upon princes; raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory:* seeing, I say, apparently such is the condition of things here, that we may soon need his pity and help, who now requesteth ours, why should we not be very ready to afford them to him? Why should we not gladly embrace our opportunity, and use our turn well; becoming aforehand with others, and preventing their reciprocal contempt or neglect of us hereafter: *Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also unto eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth:* that is, considering the inconstancy and uncertainty of affairs here, and what adversity may befal thee, be liberal upon all occasions, and thou shalt (even a good while after) find returns of thy liberality upon thee: so the Wise Man advises, and so wisdom certainly dictates that we should do.

1 Sam. ii. 7. Job xii. 21. Ps. cvii. 41. cxiii. 7, 8.

Eccles. xi. 1, 2.

5. And equity doth exact no less: for were any of us in the needy man's plight, (as easily we may be reduced thereto,) we should believe our case deserved commiseration; we should importunately demand relief; we should be grievously displeased at a repulse; we should apprehend ourselves very hardly dealt with, and sadly we should complain of inhumanity and cruelty, if succour were refused to us. In all equity therefore we should be apt to minister the same to others; for nothing can be more unreasonable or unjust, than to require or expect that from another, which in a like case we are unwilling to render unto him: it is a plain deviation from that fundamental rule, which is the base of all justice, and virtually the sum, as our Saviour telleth us, of whatever is prescribed us: *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.* I add, that upon these considerations, by unmerciful dealing, we put ourselves into a very bad and ticklish condition, wholly depending upon the con-

Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit. *Laber. Mim.*

Matt. vii. 12.

stancy of that which is most inconstant; so that if our fortune do fail, we can neither reasonably hope for, nor justly pretend to, any relief or comfort from others: *He that doeth good turns is mindful of that which may come hereafter; and when he falleth he shall find a stay.* Eccles. iii. 31.

6. We should also remember concerning ourselves, that we are mortal and frail. Were we immortal, or could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands; yea, could we foresee some definite space of time, considerably long, in which we might assuredly enjoy our stores, it might seem somewhat excusable to scrape hard, and to hold fast; to do so might look like rational providence: but since *riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to all generations*, as the Wise Man speaketh; since they must infallibly be soon left, and there is no certainty of keeping them for any time, it is very unaccountable why we should so greedily seek them, and hug them so fondly. *The rich man*, saith St. James, *as the flower of the grass, shall pass away;* it is his special doom *to fade away* suddenly; it is obvious why in many respects he is somewhat more than others obnoxious to the fatal stroke, and upon special accounts of justice he may be farther more exposed thereto: considering the case of the rich fool in the Gospel, we may easily discern them; we should reckon, that it may happen to us as it did there to him; that after we had reared great barns, and *stored up much goods for many years*, our *soul this very night* may be *required of us:* however, if it be uncertain when, it is most certain, that after a very short time our thread will be spun out; then shall we be rifled, and quite stript of all; becoming stark-naked, as when we came into the world: we shall not carry with us one grain of our glistering metals, or one rag of our gaudy stuff; our stately houses, our fine gardens, and our spacious walks, must all be exchanged for a close hole under ground; we must for ever bid farewell to our pomps and magnificences, to our feasts and jollities, to our sports and pastimes; not one of all our numerous and splendid retinue, no companion of our pleasure, no admirer of our

Prov. xxvii. 24.

Jam. i. 10, 11.

Luke xii. 20.

1 Tim. vi. 7.

Eccles. v. 15.

Job i. 21.

Isa. xiv. 11.

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fortune, no flatterer of our vices, can wait upon us; desolate and unattended we must go down to the chambers of darkness: then shall we find that to die rich, as men are wont improperly to speak, is really to die most poor; that to have carefully kept our money, is to have lost it utterly; that by leaving much, we do indeed leave worse than nothing: to have been wealthy, if we have been illiberal and unmerciful, will be no advantage or satisfaction to us after we are gone hence; yea, it will be the cause of huge damage and bitter regret unto us. All our treasures will not procure us any favour, or purchase one advocate for us in that impartial world; yea, it shall be they which will there prosecute us with clamorous accusations, will bear sore testimony against us, (*The rust of them*, saith St. James, *shall be a witness against us*, signifying our unjust or uncharitable detention of them,) will obtain a most heavy sentence upon us; they will render our audit more difficult, and inflame our reckoning; they will aggravate the guilt of our sins with imputations of unfaithfulness and ingratitude; so with their load they will press us deeper into perdition: to omit, that having so ill managed them, we shall leave them behind us as marks of obloquy, and monuments of infamy upon our memories; for ordinarily of such a rich person it is true, that Job says of him, *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place;* like one who departs from off this stage, after having very ill acted his part. Is it not therefore infinitely better to prevent this being necessarily and unprofitably deprived of our goods, by seasonably disposing them so as may conduce to our benefit, and our comfort, and our honour [h]; being very indifferent and unconcerned in our affection toward them; modest and humble in our conceits about them; moderate and sober in our enjoyments of them; contented upon

James v. 3. Luke xvi. 25. vi. 24. xii. 21. Matt. xxv. 30. James v. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Job. xxvii. 19, 23.

h Τῆς γὰρ ἐσχάτης ἀνοίας ἐστὶν ἀφεῖναί τι τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀναπομεῖναι ἐνταῦθα, ἡμῶν μικρὸν ὕστερον μελλόντων ἐντεῦθεν ἀποδημεῖν· καὶ γὰρ ὅπερ ἀπολειφθῇ ζημία γίνεται· πάντα τοίνυν ἐκεῖ προπεμπέσθω, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς διατρίβειν μέλλομεν λοιπόν. *Chrys.* tom. v. *Orat.* 54.

any reasonable occasion to lose or leave them; and especially most ready to dispense them in that best way, which God hath prescribed, according to the exigencies of humanity and charity? By thus ordering our riches, we shall render them benefits and blessings to us; we shall by them procure sure friendship and favour, great worship and respect in the other world; having so lived, (in the exercise of bounty and mercy,) we shall truly die rich, and in effect carry all our goods along with us, or rather we have thereby sent them before us; having, like wise merchants, transmitted and drawn them by a most safe conveyance into our country and home; where infallibly we shall find them, and with everlasting content enjoy them. So considering ourselves, and our state, will dispose us to the practice of these duties. SERM. XXXI. Luke xvi. 9.

Farthermore, if we contemplate our wealth itself, we may therein descry great motives to bounty V. Head of Discourse.

1. Thus to employ our riches is really the best use they are capable of; not only the most innocent, most worthy, most plausible, but the most safe, most pleasant, most advantageous, and consequently in all respects most prudent way of disposing them. To keep them close without using or enjoying them at all, is a most sottish extravagance, or a strange kind of madness; a man thence affecting to be rich quite impoverisheth himself, dispossesseth himself of all, and alienateth from himself his estate[i]: his gold is no more his than when it was in the Indies, or lay hid in the mines; his corn is no more his than if it stood growing in Arabia or China; he is no more owner of his lands than he is master of Jerusalem, or Grand Cairo: for what difference is there, whether distance of place, or baseness of mind, sever things from him? whether his own heart, or another man's hand, detain them from his use? whether he hath them not at all, or hath them to no purpose? whether one is a beggar out of necessity or by choice? is pressed to want, or a volunteer thereto?

[i] Σκορτιζόμενος ὁ πλοῦτος πέφυκε παραμένειν, συνεχόμενος ἀλλοτριοῦται. *Basil. M.*

Tam deest avaro quod habet, quam quod non habet.

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Such an one may fancy himself rich, and others as wise as himself may repute him so: but so distracted persons to themselves, and to one another, do seem great princes, and style themselves such; with as much reason almost he might pretend to be wise, or to be good. Riches are, χρήματα, things, whose nature consists in usefulness [k]; abstract that, they become nothing, things of no consideration or value; he that hath them is no more concerned in them than he that hath them not: it is the art and skill to use affluence of things wisely and nobly, which makes it wealth, and constitutes him rich that hath it; otherwise the chests may be crammed, and the barns stuffed full, while the man is miserably poor and beggarly; it is in this sense true, which the Wise Man says, *There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing.* But the very having riches (will such a man say) is matter of reputation; men do esteem and honour him that hath them. True, if he knows how, and hath the mind to use them well: otherwise all the credit they yield consists in making their master ridiculous to wise men, and infamous among all men. But, putting case that any should be so foolish as to respect us merely for seeming rich, why should we accommodate our practice to their vain opinion, or be base ourselves, because others are not wise? But, however, (may he say again,) it is a pleasant thing to see them; a heap of gold is the most lovely spectacle that one can behold; it does a man's heart good to view an abundance of good things about him. For this plea, indeed, he hath a good author: this, it should seem, was all the benefit the Wise Man observed in them, accruing to such persons: *What good*, saith he, *is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?* But if this be all they are good for, it is, one would think, a very slim benefit they afford, little able to balance the pain and care requisite to the acquist and custody of them; a benefit indeed not proper to the possessor; for

Desunt inopi multa, avaro omnia. *Sen. Epist.* 108.

Prov. xiii. 7.

Eccles. v 11.

[k] Καὶ γὰρ χρήματα διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται, οὐχ ἵνα κατορύξωμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα εἰς δέον αὐτοῖς χρησώμεθα. *Chrys. in Matt. Orat.* 49.

any one may look on them as well as he, or on the like; any one at pleasure may enjoy better sights: all the riches and ornaments of nature, the glorious splendours of heaven, and the sweet beauties of the field, are exposed to common view; the choicest magnificences and gallantries of the world do studiously present themselves to every man's eye; these in part every man truly may appropriate to himself; and by imagination any man can as well take all that he sees for his own, as the tenacious miser doth fancy his dear pelf to be his.

But mine heir (perhaps he will farther say) will thank me, will praise me, will bless me for my great care and providence: If he doth, what is that to thee? Nothing of that will concern thee, or can reach thee; thou shalt not hear what he says, or feel any good from what he does: and most probably thou art mistaken in thy opinion concerning him; as thou *knowest not who* he shall be, *that shall gather all thou heapest up*, or *shall rule over all thy labour*, *(whether he shall be a wise man or a fool*, a kinsman or a stranger, a friend or a foe,) so thou canst as little guess what he will think or say: if he hath wit, he may sweetly laugh at thee for thy fond wisdom; if he hath none, his commendations will little adorn thy memory; he will to thy disgrace spend what thou leavest, as vainly as thou didst get or keep it. But (this to be sure he will in the end say for himself) money is a good reserve against necessary occasions, or bad times that may come; against a time of old age, of sickness, of adversity; it is the surest friend a man can have in such cases, which, when all fails, will be ready to help him: *The rich man's wealth is his strong city:* the Wise Man he thinks never spake more wisely; he therefore will not dismantle this fortress, but will keep it well stored, letting therefore his wealth lie dead and useless by him. But (to let pass now the profane infidelity of this plea, excluding all hope in God, and substituting our providence in the room of his) what a folly is it thus to anticipate evil, and to create to ourselves a present adversity from a suspicion of one future; to pinch ourselves now, lest we should suffer here-

Psal. xxxix. 6. Eccles. ii. 19.

Prov. x. 15.

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after; to pine to-day, because we can imagine it possible that we may starve to-morrow; to forego certain occasions of enjoying our goods, for that perchance the like occasions may happen one day, we know not when; not to use things now, when reason bids us, because they may be useful at another time! Not considering also, that many intervenient accidents, more probably than a moderate and handsome use of our wealth, may crop the excrescences thereof.

2. But setting aside these absurd excuses of penuriousness, we may consider, that, secluding the good use of them in beneficence, riches are very impertinent, very cumbersome, very dangerous, very mischievous things; either superfluous toys, or troublesome clogs, or treacherous snares, or rather all these in combination, productive of trouble, sorrow, and sin. A small pittance will and must suffice, to all reasonable purposes, to satisfy our necessities, to procure conveniences, to yield innocent delight and ease; our nature doth not require nor can bear much: (*Take heed and beware of covetousness*, saith our Lord; *for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;* that is, a man may live well without it:) all the rest, setting beneficence apart, can only serve vanity or vice, will make us really fools and slaves[1]. (*They that will be rich*, saith the Apostle, *fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*) They puff up our minds with vain and false conceits; making us, as if we were in a dream or frenzy, to take ourselves for other persons, more great, more wise, more good, more happy than we are; for constantly, as the Wise Man observed, *The rich man is wise in his own conceit; Great men are not always wise.* And Agar thus intimates in his prayer, *Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches.* They render us insensible and forgetful of God, of ourselves, of piety and virtue, of all

Luke xii. 15. 1 Tim. vi. 8.

1 Tim. vi. 9.

Prov. xxviii. 11. Job xxxii. 9. Prov. xxx. 8.

[1] Corporis exigua desideria sunt; frigus submovere vult, alimentis famem ac sitim extinguere; quicquid extra concupiscitur, vitiis, non usibus, laboratur. *Sen. Cons. ad Helv.* 9.

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that is good and worthy of us; (*Lest I be full*, said that good man again, assigning a reason why he deprecated being rich, *and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?*) they swallow up our thoughts, our affections, our endeavours, our time and leisure, possessing our hearts with a doting love unto them, (excluding other good affections,) distracting our minds with anxious cares about them, (choaking other good thoughts,) encumbering all our life with business about them, (inconsistent with due attention to our other more weighty and necessary concernments,) filling our heads with suspicions and fears, piercing our hearts with troubles and sorrows; they immerse our souls in all the follies of pride, in all the filths of luxury, in all the mischiefs emergent from sloth and stupidity: they are *the root of all evils* unto us, and the greatest obstructions of our true happiness, rendering salvation almost impossible, and heaven in a manner inaccessible to us: so that to be rich (if severed from a sober mind and a free heart) is a great disease, and the source of many grievous distempers both of body and mind; from which we cannot well otherwise secure or rescue ourselves, than by liberally spending them in works of bounty and mercy: so shall we ease ourselves of the burdens, so shall we elude the temptations, so shall we abandon the vices, and so shall we escape all the sad mischiefs incident to them: thus to use wealth shall turn into a convenience, and an ornament of our lives, into a considerable blessing, and a ground of much comfort to us. Excluding this use of wealth, or abstracting a capacity of doing good therewith, nothing is more pitiful and despicable than it; it is but like the load or the trappings of an ass; a wise man on that condition would not choose it, or endure to be pestered with it; but would serve it as those philosophers did, who flung it away, that it might not disturb their contemplations; 'tis the power it affords of benefiting men, which only can season and ingratiate it to the relish of such a person: otherwise it is evidently true, which the Wise Man affirms, Prov. xv. 16. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith*

Prov. xxx. 9. Matt. vi. 24. Eccles. xxxi. 1. Matt. xiii. 22. Luke x. 41. 2 Tim. ii. 4. Jam. v. 5. Luke xvi. 19.

1 Tim. vi. 10. Matt. xix. 23, 24.

Ἀποφόρησαί τι τῶ ὕψους, ἵνα πίλης κεφίτερος. *Naz. Or.* 27.

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3. Again; we may consider, that to dispense our wealth liberally, is the best way to preserve it, and to continue masters thereof; what we give is not thrown away, but saved from danger[m]: while we detain it at home, (as it seems to us) it really is abroad, and at adventures; it is out at sea, sailing perilously in storms, near rocks and shelves, amongst pirates; nor can it ever be safe, till it is brought into this port, or ensured this way; when we have bestowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unquestionable safety; in a place where no rapine, no deceit, no mishap, no corruption can ever by any means come at it[n]. All our doors and bars, all our forces and guards, all the circumspection and vigilancy we can use, are no defence or security at all in comparison to this disposal thereof: the poor man's stomach is a granary for our corn, which never can be exhausted; the poor man's back is a wardrobe for our clothes, which never can be pillaged; the poor man's pocket is a bank for our money, which never can disappoint or deceive us; all the rich traders in the world may decay and break; but the poor man can never fail, except God himself turn bankrupt; for what we give to the poor, we deliver and entrust in his hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch it; it is laid up in heaven, whither no thief can climb, where no moth or rust do abide. In despite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich: for God's providence is his estate; God's wisdom and power are his defence; God's love and favour are his reward; God's word is his assurance; who hath said it, that *he which giveth to the poor shall not lack*; no vicissitude therefore of

Prov. xxviii. 27.

[m] Μηδὲ νόμιζε τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην ἀνάλυμα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ πρόσοδον, μηδὲ δαπάνην, ἀλλὰ πραγματείαν. μείζω γὰρ λαμβάνεις, ἢ δίδως, &c. *Chrys.* tom. v. p. 208.

[n] Μὴ τοίνυν φειδώμεθα χρημάτων· μᾶλλον δὲ φειδώμεθα τῶν χρημάτων· ὁ γὰρ φειδόμενος τῶν ὄντων εἰς τὰς τῶν πενήτων χεῖρας, αὐτὰ ἀναστίθεται, εἰς τὸν ἄσυλον θησαυρὸν καὶ λῃσαῖς καὶ οἰκέταις καὶ συκοφάνταις κακούργοις, καὶ πάσαις ἰφόδοις ἀνάλωτον. *Chrys.* tom. v. *Orat.* 55.

Multi Sancti, et Sanctæ omnimodo caventes ipsas velut matres deliciarum divitias dispergendo pauperibus abjecerunt, et tali modo in cœlestibus thesauros tutius condiderunt. *Aug. Ep.* 121.

things can surprise him, or find him unfurnished; no dis- SERM. XXXI.
aster can impoverish him; no adversity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reserve against all times and occasions: he that *deviseth liberal things, by liberal things* Is. xxxii. 8.
shall he stand, saith the Prophet. But, on the other hand, being niggardly is the likeliest course we can take to lose our wealth and estate; we thereby expose them to danger, and leave them defenceless; we subject them to the envious eye, to the slanderous tongue, to the ravenous and insidious hand; we deprive them of divine protection, which if it be away, *the watchmen waketh but in vain:* Psal. cxxxvii. 1.
we provoke God irrecoverably to take it from us, as he did the talent from that unprofitable servant, who did not use it well. We do indeed thereby yield God just cause of war and enmity against us; which being *omnia dat qui justa negat*; we do forfeit all to divine justice, by denying that portion which belongs to him, and which he claims. Can we hope to live in quiet possession of any thing, if we refuse to pay our due tributes and taxes imposed upon us by our almighty Sovereign; if we live in such rebellion against his authority, such violation of his right, such diffidence to his word? No: *He that trusteth in his* Prov. xi. 28.
riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch: such is the difference between the covetous and the liberal, in point of security and success concerning their estate.

Even according to the human and ordinary way of esteeming things, (abstracting from the special providence of God,) the liberal person hath, in consequence of his bounty, more real security for his wealth, than this world hath any other: he thereby gets an interest in the gratitude and affection of those whom he obligeth, together with the good-will and respect of all men, who are spectators of his virtuous and generous dealing: the hearts and memories of men are repositories to him of a treasure, which nothing can extort from him, or defraud him of. If any mischance should arrive, or any want come near him, all men would be ready to commiserate him, every man would hasten to his succour. As when a haughty, a

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greedy, or a gripple man do fall into calamity or disgrace, scarce any one regardeth or pitieth him: fortune, deserting such a person, carries all with it, few or none stick to him; his most zealous flatterers are commonly the first that forsake him; contempt and neglect are the only adherents to his condition; that of the Wise Man appears verified, *He that hideth his eyes from the poor, shall have many a curse.* So the courteous and bountiful person, when fortune seems to frown on him, hath a sure refuge in the good-will and esteem of men; all men, upon the accounts of honour and honesty, take themselves to be concerned in his case, and engaged to favour him; even those, who before were strangers, become then his friends, and in effect discover their affection to him; it, in the common judgment of people, appears an indignity and a disgrace to mankind, that such a man should want or suffer.

Miraris cum tu argento post omnia ponas, Si nemo præstet quem non mercearis amorem. *Hor. Serm.* i. 1.

Prov. xxviii. 27.

4. Nay, farther, we may consider, that exercising bounty is the most advantageous method of improving and increasing an estate; but that being tenacious and illiberal, doth tend to the diminution and decay thereof. The way to obtain a great increase, is to sow much: he that sows little, how can he expect a good crop? It is as true in spiritual husbandry as it is in others; that *what a man soweth, that he shall reap*, both in kind and according to proportion: so that great husbandman St. Paul assureth us, *He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully:* and Solomon means the same when he saith, *To him that soweth righteousness, to him is a sure reward.* The way to gain abundantly is, you know well, to trade boldly; he that will not adventure any thing considerable, how can he think of a large return? *Honour the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine*, Prov iii. 9, 10. 'Tis so likewise in the evangelical negociations; if we put out much upon score of conscience or charity, we shall be sure to profit much. Liberality is the most beneficial traffick that can be; it is bringing our wares

Gal. vi. 7, 8.

2 Cor. ix. 6, 10.

Prov. xi. 18.

to the best market; it is letting out our money into the best hands; we thereby lend our money to God, who repays with vast usury; an hundred to one is the rate he allows at present, and above a hundred millions to one he will render hereafter; so that if you will be merchants this way, you shall be sure to thrive, you cannot fail to grow rich most easily and speedily: *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered himself:* this is that which St. Paul again argues upon, when, commending the Philippians' free kindness toward him, he says, *Not because I desired a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* Bounty yields καρπὸν πλεονάζοντα, a fruit that multiplies, and abundantly turns to good account; it indeed procuring God's benediction, the fountain of all desirable plenty and prosperity; for *The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.* It is therefore the greatest want of policy, the worst ill-husbandry and unthriftiness that can be, to be sparing this way; he that useth it cannot be thriving; he must spend upon the main stock, and may be sure to get nothing considerable. God ordinarily so proceeds, as to recompense and retaliate men in the same kind, wherein they endeavour to please him, or presume to offend him; so that for them who freely offer him their goods, he in regard thereto will prosper their dealings, and bless their estates: (*For this very thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto*, says Moses:) but they who will not lay out any thing for him, he will not concern himself in their success otherwise than to cross it, or, which is worse, to curse it; for if he seem to favour them for a time with some prosperity in their affairs, their condition is much worse thereby, their account will be more grievous, and their fate more disastrous in the end.

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Prov. xi. 25.

Phil. iv. 17.

Prov. x. 22.

Deut. xv. 18.

Ps. lxxiii. 17.

5. Farther, the contributing part of our goods to the poor will qualify us to enjoy the rest with satisfaction and comfort. The oblation of these first-fruits, as it will sanctify the whole lump of our estate, so it will sweeten it; having offered this well-pleasing sacrifice of piety, having

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discharged this debt of justice, having paid this tribute of gratitude, our hearts being at rest, and our conscience well satisfied, we shall, like those good people in the Acts, *eat our meat with gladness and singleness of heart;* to see the poor man by our means accommodated, eased, and refreshed, will give a delicious relish to all our enjoyments. But withholding his portion from the poor, as it will pollute and profane all our estate, so it will render the fruition thereof sour or unsavoury to us: for can we with any content taste our dainties, or view our plenties, while the poor man stands in sight pining with hunger[o]? Can we without regret see our walls clothed with tapestry, our horses decked with golden trappings, our attendants strutting in wanton gaiety, while our honest poor brother appears half-naked, and trembling with cold? Can we carry on one finger enough to furnish ten poor people with necessaries, and have the heart within us, without shame and displeasure, to see them want? No; the sense of our impiety and ingratitude toward God, of our inhumanity and unworthiness toward our neighbour, will not fail (if ever we considerately reflect on our behaviour,) to sting us with cruel remorse and self-condemnation; the clamours of want and misery surrounding us will pierce our ears, and wound our hearts; the frequent objects of pity and mercy, do what we can to banish them from our prospect or regard, will so assail, and so pursue us, as to disturb the freedom of our enjoyments, to quash the briskness of our mirth, to allay the sweetness of our pleasure; yea, rather, if stupidity and obduration have not seized on us, to embitter all unto us, we shall feel that true, which Zophar speaks of the cruel and covetous oppressor,

Acts ii. 46.

Job. xx. 18, 20, 22.

Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly,—he shall not rejoice in his substance,—in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.

6. I shall touch but one consideration more, persuasive of this practice; it is this: The peculiar nature of our

[o] Ἔργὸς ὁ πένης, εἰς τοῦτον ἀπέρευξαί τι τῶν περιττῶν· τί γὰρ σὺ κάμνεις ἀπεπτῶν, ὁ οὗτος πεινῶν, ὁ σὺ κραιπαλῶν, ὁ οὗτος ὑδεριῶν, ὁ σὺ κάρῳ βαρύνων, καὶ οὗτος περιτρεπόμενος νόσῳ; *Nazian. Orat.* 27.

religion especially requires it, and the honour thereof exacts it from us; nothing better suits Christianity, nothing more graces it, than liberality; nothing is more inconsistent therewith, or more disparageth it, than being miserable and sordid. A Christian niggard is the veriest nonsense that can be; for what is a Christian? what, but a man who adores God alone, who loves God above all things, who reposes all his trust and confidence in God? What is he, but one who undertaketh to imitate the most good and bountiful God; to follow, as the best pattern of his practice, the most benign and charitable JESUS, the Son of God; to obey the laws of God, and his Christ, the sum and substance of which is charity; half whose religion doth consist in loving his neighbour as himself? What is he, farther, but one who hath renounced this world, with all the vain pomps and pleasures of it; who professes himself in disposition and affection of mind to forsake all things for Christ's sake; who pretends little to value, affect, or care for any thing under heaven; having all his main concernments and treasures, his heart, his hopes, and his happiness, in another world? Such is a Christian. And what is a niggard? All things quite contrary: one whose practice manifestly shews him to worship another thing beside and before God; to love Mammon above God, and more to confide in it than in him; one who bears small good-will, kindness, or pity toward his brother; who is little affected or concerned with things future or celestial; whose mind and heart are rivetted to this world; whose hopes and happinesses are settled here below; whose soul is deeply immersed and buried in earth; one who, according to constant habit, notoriously breaketh the two great heads of Christian duty, *loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself*; it is therefore, by comparing those things, very plain, that we pretend to reconcile gross contradictions and inconsistencies, if we profess ourselves to be Christians, and are illiberal. It is indeed the special grace and glory of our religion, that it consisteth not in barren speculations, or empty formalities, or forward professions; not in fancying curiously, or speak-

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ing zealously, or looking demurely; but in really producing sensible fruits of goodness; in doing, as St. Paul signifies, *things good and profitable unto men*, such as those chiefly are of which we speak. The most gracious wisdom of God hath so modelled our religion, that according to it piety and charity are the same thing; that we can never express ourselves more dutiful toward him, or better please him, or more truly glorify him, than when we are kind and good to our poor brother. We grossly mistake, if we take giving of alms to be a Jewish or Popish practice, suitable to children and dullards in religion, beneath so refined, so improved, so loftily spiritual gallants as we: no; 'tis a duty most properly and most highly Christian, as none more, a most goodly fruit of grace, and a most faithful mark thereof: *By the experiment of this ministration, we*, as St. Paul saith, *glorify God for our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for our liberal distribution unto our brethren, and unto all men:* without it our faith is dead and senseless, our high attainments are fond presumptions, our fine notions and delicate spiritualities are in truth but silly dreams, the issues of a proud and ignorant fancy: he that appears hard-hearted and close-fisted towards his needy brother, let him think or call himself what he pleaseth, he plainly is no Christian, but a blemish, a reproach, and a scandal to that honourable name.

2 Cor. ix. 13.

7. To all these considerations and reasons inducing to the practice of this kind of charity, I might subjoin examples, and set before you the fairest copies that can be imagined thereof. We have for it the pattern of God himself, who is infinitely munificent and merciful; *from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth; who giveth life, and breath, and all things unto all;* who *giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.* We have the example of the Son of God, who out of pure charity did freely part with the riches and glories of eternity, voluntarily embracing extreme poverty and want for our sake, that we who were poor might be enriched, we that were miserable might become happy; who *went about doing good*, spent

Jam. i. 5, 17. Acts xvii. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 9.

Acts. x. 38.

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all his life in painful dispensation of beneficence, and relieving the needs of men in every kind. We have the blessed Patriarchs to follow, who at God's pleasure and call did readily leave their country, their friends, their goods, and all they had. We have the practice of the holy Apostles, who freely *let go all to follow their Lord;* who cheerfully sustained all sorts of losses, disgraces, and pains, for promoting the honour of God, and procuring good unto men: we have, to move and encourage us hereto, the first and best Christians, most full of grace and holy zeal, who *so many as were possessors of lands and houses did sell them*, and did impart the price of them to the community, *so that there was none poor among them*, and that *distribution was made to every one as he had need.* We have all the saints and eminent servants of God in all times, who have been high and wonderful in the performance of these duties. I could tell you of the blessed martyr St. Cyprian, who was liberal by wholesale, bestowing all at once a fair estate on God and the poor; of the renowned bishop St. Basil, who constantly waited on the sick, and kissed their sores; of the most pious confessor St. Martin, who having but one coat left, and seeing a poor man that wanted clothes, tore it in two pieces, and gave one to that *poor man:* and many like instances out of authentic history might be produced, apt to provoke our imitation. I might also, to beget emulation and shame in us, represent exemplary practices of humanity and charity even in Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans, (such as in these cold days might pass for more than ordinary among us,) but I shall only propound one present and sensible example; that of this noble city, whose public bounty and charity in all kinds (in education of orphans, in curing the diseased both in body and mind, in provision for the poor, in relieving all sorts of necessities and miseries) let me earnestly entreat and exhort us all for God's sake, as we are able, by our private charity to imitate, to encourage, and to assist; let us do this so much the more willingly and freely, as the sad circumstances of things, by God's judgments brought

Matt. xix. 27.

Acts iv. 34, 35.

Pontius in vit. Cypr. Greg. Naz. Orat. 40. Sulp. Sever.

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upon us, do plainly require, that the public charity itself (lying under so great impediments, discouragements, and distresses) should be supported, supplied, and relieved by particular liberality. No words that I can devise will be so apt to affect and move you, as the case itself, if you please to consider it: hear it therefore speaking, and, I pray with a pious and charitable disposition of mind attend thereto:

A true report, &c.

For this excellent pattern of pious bounty and mercy, let us heartily thank Almighty God; let us humbly implore God's blessing on the future management of it; let us pay due respects to the worthy promoters thereof, and pray for rewards upon them, answerable to their charitable care and industry employed therein; let us also according to our ability perform our duty in following and furthering it: for encouragement to which practice, give me leave briefly to reflect upon the latter part of my text; which represents some instances of the felicity proper to a bountiful person, or some rewards peculiar to the exercising the duties of bounty and mercy.

The first is, *His righteousness endureth for ever.* These words are capable of various senses, or of divers respects; they may import, that the fame and remembrance of his bounty is very durable, or that the effects thereof do lastingly continue, or that eternal rewards are designed thereto; they may respect the bountiful man himself, or his posterity here; they may simply relate to an endurance in God's regard and care; or they may with that also comprehend a continuance in the good memory and honourable mention of men. Now in truth, according to all these interpretations, the bountiful man's righteousness doth endure for ever, that is, very lastingly, (or so long as the special nature of the case doth bear,) in any sense; or for an absolute perpetuity in some sense: the words in their plenitude do naturally and without straining involve so many truths; none of which, therefore, we think fit to exclude, but shall briefly touch them all.

1. As for future reputation and fame, (which that it in

part is intended here, that which precedes, *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*, doth argue,) it is evident, that it peculiarly attends upon this practice: the bountiful person is especially that *just* man, whose *memory* Prov. x. 7. *is blessed*, (is μετ' ἐγκωμίων, as the Greek renders it; that is, is prosecuted with commendations and praises.) No spices can so embalm a man, no monument can so preserve his name and memory, as works of beneficence; no other fame is comparably so precious, or truly glorious, as that which grows from thence; the renown of power and prowess, of wit or learning, of any wisdom or skill, may dwell in the fancies of men with some admiration: but the remembrance of bounty reigns in their hearts with cordial esteem and affection; there erecting immoveable trophies over death and oblivion, and thence spreading itself through the tongues of men with sincere and sprightly commendations. The bountiful man's very dust is fragrant, and his grave venerable; his name is never mentioned without respect; his actions have always these best echoes, with innumerable iterations resounding after them: *His good shall be established, and the congregation shall declare his alms*, Eccles. xxxii. 11. This was a true friend to mankind; this was a real benefactor to the world; this was a man good in earnest, and pious to good purpose.

2. The effects of his righteousness are likewise very durable: when he is departed hence, and in person is no more seen, he remains visible and sensible in the footsteps and fruits of his goodness; the poor still beholds him present in the subsistence of himself, and his family; the sick man feels him in the refreshment, which he yet enjoys by his provision; he supervives in the heart of the afflicted, which still resents the comfort, and rejoices in the ease, which he procured him; all the world derives benefit from him by the edification it receiveth from his example; religion obtaineth profit and ornament, God himself enjoyeth glory and praise from his righteousness.

3. His righteousness also endureth in respect to his posterity. It is an usual plea for tenacity and parsimony,

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that care must be had of posterity, that enough must be provided and laid up for the family: but in truth this is a very absurd excuse; and doing according thereto, is a very preposterous method of proceeding toward that end; it is really the greatest improvidence in that respect, and the truest neglect that can be of our children; for so doing, together with a seeming estate, we entail a real curse upon them; we divest them of God's protection and benediction, (the only sure preservatives of an estate;) we leave them heirs of nothing so much as of punishments due to our ingratitude, our infidelity, our impiety and injustice both toward God and man: whereas by liberally bestowing on the poor, we demise unto them God's blessing, which is the best inheritance; we recommend them to God's special care, which is the best tuition; we leave them God's protection and providence, which are a wealth indefectible and inexhaustible; we constitute God their guardian, who will most faithfully manage, and most wisely improve their substance, both that which we leave to them, and that which we gave for them to the poor; we thereby in good part entitle them to the rewards appropriate to our pious charity, our faith, our gratitude, our self-denial, our justice, to whatever of good is virtually contained in our acts of bounty; to omit the honour and good-will of men, which constantly adhere to the bountiful man's house and family. Prov. xiii. 22. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.* It is therefore expressly mentioned in Scripture as a recompence peculiar to this virtue, that security from want and all happiness do attend the posterity of the bountiful person: *He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed*, saith David of him generally: and David also particularly observed, that in all the course of his long life he could find no exception to the rule: *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.*

Ps. xxxvii. 26.

Ps. xxxvii. 25.

4. His righteousness also endureth for ever in the perpetual favour of God, and in the eternal rewards which God will confer upon him, who, out of conscience and re-

verence toward God, out of good-will and kindness toward his brother, hath dispersed, and given to the poor. *God will not*, as the Apostle saith, *be unjust to forget his labour of charity in ministering* to his poor brother: from the seed which he *hath sown to the spirit*, he shall assuredly reap a most plentiful crop of blessings spiritual; he shall effectually enjoy *the good foundation* that he hath *stored up*: for the goods he hath sold and delivered, he shall *bona fide* receive his bargain, *the hidden treasure* and *precious pearl* of eternal life; for this best improvement of his talent of worldly riches, he shall hear the *Euge bone serve, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into thy master's joy:* he shall at last find God infinitely more bountiful to him, than he hath been unto the poor.

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Heb. vi. 10.

Gal. vi. 8.

1 Tim. vi. 19.

Matt. xiii. 46.

Matt. xxv. 21, 23.

Thus when all the flashes of sensual pleasure are quite extinct; when all the flowers of secular glory are withered away; when all earthly treasures are buried in darkness; when this world, and all the fashion of it, are utterly vanished and gone, the bountiful man's state will still be firm and flourishing, and *his righteousness shall endure for ever.*

It follows, *His horn shall be exalted with honour.* A horn is an emblem of power; for in it the beasts' strength, offensive and defensive, doth consist; and of plenty, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of sanctity, for that in it was put the holy oil, with which kings were consecrated; and of dignity, both in consequence upon the reasons mentioned, (as denoting might, and influence, and sacredness accompanying sovereign dignity,) and because also it is an especial beauty and ornament to the creature which hath it; so that this expression (*His horn shall be exalted with honour*) may be supposed to import, that an abundance of high and holy, of firm and solid honour shall attend upon the bountiful person. And that so it truly shall, may from many considerations appear.

1 Sam. xvi. 13. 1 Kings i. 39.

1. Honour is inseparably annexed thereto, as its natural companion and shadow. God hath impressed upon all virtue a majesty and a beauty, which do command respect,

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and with a kindly violence extort veneration from men: such is the natural constitution of our souls, that as our sense necessarily liketh what is fair and sweet, so our mind unavoidably will esteem what is virtuous and worthy; all good actions as such are honourable: but of all virtues, beneficence doth with most unquestionable right claim honour, and with irresistible force procures it; as it is indeed the most divine of virtues, so men are most apt to venerate them, whom they observe eminently to practise it. Other virtues men see, and approve as goodly to the sight; but this they taste and feel; this by most sensible experience they find to be pleasant and profitable, and cannot therefore but highly prize it. They, who *do their alms before men*, although out of an unworthy vainglorious design, *have* yet, as our Saviour intimates, *their reward:* they fail not to get honour thereby; and even so have no bad pennyworth: for, in the Wise Man's judgment, *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches;* they receive at least fine air, for gross earth; and things very spiritual for things most material; they obtain that which every man doth naturally desire and prize, for that which only fashion in some places endeareth and commendeth: they get the end for the means; for scarce any man seeketh wealth for itself, but either for honour, or for virtue's sake, that he may live creditably, or may do good therewith; necessity is served with a little, pleasure may be satisfied with a competence; abundance is required only to support honour or promote good; and honour by natural connection adhereth to bounty. *He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and honour*, Prov. xxi. 21.

Φιλῶνται σχεδὸν μᾶλιστα οἱ ἐλευθεριώτεροι τῶν ἐπ' ἀρετῆς, ὠφέλιμοι γάρ. *Arist.*

Matt. vi. 1.

Prov. xxii. 1.

Αἱ γὰρ δυνατείαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμήν ἐσιν αἱρεταί. *Arist.*

2. But farther, an accession of honour, according to gracious promise, (grounded upon somewhat of special reason of equity and decency in the thing itself,) is due from God unto the bountiful person, and is by special providence surely conferred on him. There is no kind of piety, or instance of obedience, whereby God himself is more signally honoured, than by this. These are chiefly those *good works*, the which *men seeing*, are apt to *glorify*

Matt. v. 16.

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our Father which is in heaven. Phil. i. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God.* To these fruits that is most applicable which our Lord saith, *Hereby is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit;* for as *he that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker;* so *he honoureth him, that hath mercy on the poor.* The comfortable experience of good in this sort of actions will most readily dispose men to admire and commend the excellency, the wisdom, the goodness of the divine laws, will therefore procure God hearty praise and thanks for them: for, as St. Paul teacheth us, *The administration of his service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whilst by experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.* Since then God is so peculiarly honoured by this practice, it is but equal and fit that God should remunerate it with honour: God's noble goodness will not let him seem defective in any sort of beneficial correspondence toward us; we shall never be able to yield him any kind of good thing in duty, which he will not be more apt to render us in grace; they who, as Solomon speaketh, *honour God with their substance*, shall by God certainly be honoured with his blessing: reason intimates so much, and we beside have God's express word for it: *Them*, saith he, *who honour me, I will honour.* He that absolutely and independently is the fountain of all honour, *from whom*, as good king David saith, *riches and honour cometh*, for that *he reigneth over all*, he will assuredly prefer and dignify those, who have been at special care and cost to advance his honour. He that hath the *hearts of all men in his hands*, and *fashioneth them* as he pleaseth, will raise the bountiful man in the judgments and affections of men. He that ordereth all the events of things, and disposeth success as he thinks fit, will cause the bountiful person's enterprises to prosper, and come off with credit. He will

John xv. 8. Prov. xiv. 31. 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13. Prov. iii. 9. 1 Sam. ii. 30. 1 Chron. xxix. 12. Prov. xxi. 1. Ps. xxxiii. 15.

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not suffer the reputation of so real an honourer of himself to be extremely slurred by disaster, to be blasted by slander, to be supplanted by envy or malice; but will *bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day.*

Ps. xxxvii. 6.

3 God will thus exalt the bountiful man's horn even here in this world, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in the future state: he shall there be set at the right hand, in a most honourable place and rank, among the chief friends and favourites of the heavenly King, in happy consortship with the holy angels and blessed saints; where, in recompence of his pious bounty, he shall, from the bountiful hands of his most gracious Lord, receive *an incorruptible crown of righteousness*, and *an unfading crown of glory.* The which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all praise. Amen.

Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXII.

UPON THE PASSION OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

PHIL. ii. 8.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

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WHEN, in consequence of the original apostacy from God, which did banish us from paradise, and by continued rebellions against him, inevitable to our corrupt and impotent nature, mankind had forfeited the amity of God, (the chief of all goods, the fountain of all happiness,) and had incurred his displeasure; (the greatest of all evils, the foundation of all misery:)

Cyril. c. Jul. viii. p. 278. ix. p. 303. John iii. 36. Col. iii. 6.

When poor man having deserted his natural Lord and Protector, *other lords had got dominion over him*, so that he was captivated by the foul, malicious, cruel spirits, and enslaved to his own vain mind, to vile lusts, to wild passions:

Iren. iii. 33. 34. Isa. xxvi. 13. Iren. iii. 8.

When, according to an eternal rule of justice, that sin deserveth punishment, and by an express law, wherein death was enacted to the trangressors of God's command, the root of our stock, and consequently all its branches, stood adjudged to utter destruction:

Gen. iv. 7. ii. 17. Iren. v. 16.

When, according to St. Paul's expressions, *all the world was become guilty before God*, (or, subjected to God's judgment:) *all men* (Jews and Gentiles) *were under sin, under condemnation, under the curse; all men were concluded into disobedience*, and *shut up together* (as close prisoners)

Rom. iii. 19. ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ. Rom. iii. 9. v. 16, 18. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. xi. 32. τοὺς ἀπειθήσαντας. Gal. iii. 22.

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under sin; all men had sinned, and come short of the glory of God: death had passed over all, because all had sinned.

Rom. iii. 23. v. 12.

When for us, being plunged into so wretched a condition, no visible remedy did appear, no possible redress could be obtained here below: (for what means could we have of recovering God's favour, who were apt perpetually to contract new debts and guilts, but not able to discharge any old scores? What capacity of mind or will had we to entertain mercy, who were no less stubbornly perverse and obdurate in our crimes, than ignorant or infirm? How could we be reconciled unto Heaven, who had an innate antipathy to God and goodness? [*Sin*, according to our natural state, and secluding evangelical grace, *reigning in our mortal bodies, no good thing dwelling in us*; there being a predominant *law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin*; a main ingredient of our *old man* being a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity to God*, and *cannot submit to his law*; we being *alienated from the life of God by the blindness of our hearts*, and *enemies in our minds by wicked works*:] How could we revive to any good hope, who were *dead in trespasses and sins*, God having withdrawn his quickening Spirit? How at least could we for one moment stand upright in God's sight, upon the natural terms, excluding all sin, and exacting perfect obedience?)

Rom. vi. 12, 14, 20. Rom. vii. 18, 5. Rom. vii. 28. Rom. vi. 6. Coloss. iii. 9. Ephes. iv. 22. Rom. viii. 7. οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται. Ephes. iv. 18. Coloss. i. 21. Rom. v. 10.

When this, I say, was our forlorn and desperate case, then Almighty God, out of his infinite goodness, was pleased to look upon us (as he sometime did upon Jerusalem, *lying polluted in her blood*) with an eye of pity and mercy, so as graciously to design a redemption for us out of all that woful distress; and no sooner by his incomprehensible wisdom did he foresee we should lose ourselves, than by his immense grace he did conclude to restore us.

Ephes. ii. 5. (Rom. vi. 13, 11.) Psal. cxliii. 2. Exod. xxxiv. 7. Ezek. xvi. 6.

But how could this happy design well be compassed? How in consistence with the glory, with the justice, with the truth of God, could such enemies be reconciled, such offenders be pardoned, such wretches be saved? Would

Eph. i. 4, 9, 11, & iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. i. 20. Rev. xiii. 8.

the omnipotent Majesty, so affronted, design to treat with his rebels immediately, without an intercessor or advocate? Would the sovereign Governor of the world suffer thus notoriously his right to be violated, his authority to be slighted, his honour to be trampled on, without some notable vindication or satisfaction? Would the great Patron of justice relax the terms of it, or ever permit a gross breach thereof to pass with impunity? Would the immutable God of truth expose his veracity or his constancy to suspicion, by so reversing that peremptory sentence of death upon sinners, that it should not in a sort eminently be accomplished? Would the most righteous and most holy God let slip an opportunity so advantageous for demonstrating his perfect love of innocence, and abhorrence of iniquity? Could we therefore well be cleared from our guilt without an expiation, or reinstated in freedom without a ransom, or exempted from condemnation without some punishment?

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Rom. xvi. 25. Tit. i. 2.

Athan. de Incarn. Gen. ii. 17.

No: God was so pleased to prosecute his designs of goodness and mercy, as thereby nowise to impair or obscure, but rather to advance and illustrate the glories of his sovereign dignity, of his severe justice, of his immaculate holiness, of his unchangeable steadiness in word and purpose. He accordingly would be sued to for peace and mercy: nor would he grant them absolutely, without due compensations for the wrongs he had sustained; yet so that his goodness did find us a Mediator, and furnish us with means to satisfy him. He would not condescend to a simple remission of our debts; yet so, that, saving his right and honour, he did stoop lower for an effectual abolition of them. He would make good his word, not to let our trespasses go unpunished; yet so, that by our punishment we might receive advantage. He would manifest his detestation of wickedness in a way more illustrious than if he had persecuted it down to hell, and irreversibly doomed it to endless torment.

But how might these things be effected? Where was there a Mediator proper and worthy to intercede for us? Who could presume to solicit and plead in our behalf?

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Who should dare to put himself between God and us, or offer to screen mankind from the divine wrath and vengeance? Who had so great an interest in the court of heaven, as to ingratiate such a brood of apostate enemies thereto? Who could assume the confidence to propose terms of reconciliation, or to agitate a new covenant, wherewith God might be satisfied, and whereby we might be saved? Where, in heaven or earth, could there be found a priest fit to atone for sins so vastly numerous, so extremely heinous? And whence should a sacrifice be taken, of value sufficient to expiate for so manifold enormities, committed against the infinite Majesty of Heaven? Who could *find out the everlasting redemption* of innumerable souls, or lay down a competent ransom for them all? Not to say, could also purchase for them eternal life and bliss?

Αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὑράμενος. Heb. ix. 12.

These are questions which would puzzle all the wit of man, yea, would gravel all the wisdom of angels to resolve: for plain it is, that no creature on earth, none in heaven, could well undertake or perform this work.

Where on earth, among the degenerate sons of Adam, could be found *such an high priest as became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners?* and how could a man, however innocent and pure as a seraphim, so perform his duty, as to do more than merit or satisfy for himself? How many lives could the life of one man serve to ransom; seeing that it is asserted of the greatest and richest among men, that *none of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.*

Heb. vii. 26.

Ps. xlix. 7.

And how could available help in this case be expected from any of the angelical host; seeing (beside their being in nature different from us, and thence improper to merit or satisfy for us; beside their comparative meanness, and infinite distance from the majesty of God,) they are but our fellow-servants, and have obligations to discharge for themselves, and cannot be solvent for more than for their own debts of gratitude and service to their infinitely bountiful Creator; they also themselves needing a Saviour, to preserve them by his grace in their happy state?

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Indeed, no creature might aspire to so august an honour, none could achieve so marvellous a work, as to redeem from infinite guilt and misery the noblest part of all the visible creation: none could presume to invade that high prerogative of God, or attempt to infringe the truth of that reiterated proclamation, *I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour.*

Isa. xliii. 11. xlv. 21. Hos. xiii. 4.

Wherefore, seeing that a supereminent dignity of person was required in our Mediator, and that an immense value was to be presented for our ransom; seeing that *God saw there was no man, and wondered* (or took special notice) *that there was no intercessor;* it must be *his arm* alone that could *bring salvation;* none beside God himself could intermeddle therein.

Isa. lix. 16. κατενόησε, LXX.

But how could God undertake the business? Could he become a suitor or intercessor to his offended self? Could he present a sacrifice, or disburse a satisfaction to his own justice? Could God alone contract and stipulate with God in our behalf? No; surely man also must concur in the transaction: some amends must issue from him, somewhat must be paid out of our stock: human will and consent must be interposed, to ratify a firm covenant with us, inducing obligation on our part. It was decent and expedient, that as man, by wilful transgression and presumptuous self-pleasing, had so highly offended, injured, and dishonoured his Maker; so man also, by willing obedience, and patient submission to God's pleasure, should greatly content, right, and glorify him.

Here then did lie the stress; this was the knot, which only divine wisdom could loose. And so indeed it did in a most effectual and admirable way: for in correspondence to all the exigencies of the case, (that God and man both might act their parts in saving us,) the blessed eternal Word, the only Son of God, by the good-will of his Father, did vouchsafe to intercede for us, and to undertake our redemption; in order thereto voluntarily being sent down from heaven, assuming human flesh, subjecting himself to all the infirmities of our frail nature, and to the worst in-

Ephes. i. 8. Luke i. 78. Ephes. i. 5. Tit. iii. 4. Rom. v. 8. Gal. iv. 4. John vi 38. Heb. x. 7. John i. 14. Heb. v. 2. iv. 15 Ephes i 6. Const. Apost. viii. 12. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14.

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conveniences of our low condition; therein meriting God's favour to us, by a perfect obedience to the law, and satisfying God's justice by a most patient endurance of pains in our behalf; in completion of all, willingly laying down his life for the ransom of our souls, and pouring forth his blood in sacrifice for our sins.

Heb. ix. 15. ii. 9. Col. i. 22.

1 Tim. iii. 16.

This is that great and wonderful *mystery of godliness*, (or of our holy religion,) the which St. Paul here doth express, in these words concerning our blessed Saviour, *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

In which words are contained divers points very observable. But seeing the time will not allow me to treat on them in any measure as they deserve, I shall (waving all the rest) insist but upon one particular, couched in the last words, *even the death of the cross;* which by a special emphasis do excite us to consider the manner of that holy passion which we now commemorate; the contemplation whereof, as it is most seasonable, so it is ever very profitable.

Θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

Now then in this kind of passion we may consider divers notable adjuncts; namely these: 1. Its being in appearance criminal. 2. Its being most bitter and painful. 3. Its being most ignominious and shameful. 4. Its peculiar advantageousness to the designs of our Lord in suffering. 5. Its practical efficacy.

I. We may consider our Lord's suffering as criminal; or as in semblance being an execution of justice upon him. *He*, as the Prophet foretold of him, *was numbered among the transgressors;* and God, saith St. Paul, *made him sin for us, who knew no sin:* that is, God ordered him to be treated as a most sinful or criminous person, who in himself was perfectly innocent, and void of the least inclination to offend.

Isa. liii. 12. 2 Cor. v. 21.

So in effect it was, that he was impeached of the highest crimes; as a violator of the divine laws in divers in-

John v. 18. x. 30, &c. vii. 12.

stances; as a designer to subvert their religion and temple; as an impostor, deluding and seducing the people; as a blasphemer, assuming to himself the properties and prerogatives of God; as a seditious and rebellious person, *perverting the nation*, inhibiting payments of tribute to Cæsar, usurping royal authority, and styling himself *Christ a king*: in a word, as a malefactor, or one guilty of enormous offences; so his persecutors avowed to Pilate, *If*, said they, *he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.* As such he was represented and arraigned; as such, although by a sentence wrested by malicious importunity, against the will and conscience of the judge, he was condemned, and accordingly suffered death.

Matt. xxvi. 61. xxvii. 40. Luke xxiii. 2 Matt. xxvii. 63 Const. Apost. v. 14. κακοποιός. John xviii. 30.

Now whereas any death or passion of our Lord, as being in itself immensely valuable, and most precious in the sight of God, might have been sufficient toward the accomplishment of his general designs, (the appeasing God's wrath, the satisfaction of divine justice, the expiation of our guilt;) it may be inquired, why God should thus expose him, or why he should choose to suffer under this odious and ugly character[x]? Which inquiry is the more considerable, because it is especially this circumstance which crosseth the fleshly sense and worldly prejudices of men, so as to have rendered the Gospel offensive to the superstitious Jews, and despicable to conceited Gentiles. For so Tryphon in Justin Martyr, although, from conviction by testimonies of Scripture, he did admit the Messias was to suffer *hardly*, yet that it should be in this *accursed* manner, he could not digest. So the great adversaries of Christianity (Celsus, Porphyry, Julian) did with most contempt urge this exception against it. So St. Paul did observe, that *Christ crucified was unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.* Wherefore, to avoid those scandals, and that we may better admire the wisdom of God in this dispensation, it may be fit to assign some reasons intimated

Orig. c. Cels. ii. p. 83. vii. p. 368. Aug. de Civ. D. 10. 28. Cyril. c. Jul. vi. p. 194. 1 Cor. i. 23.

[x] Cur si Deus fuit, et mori voluit, non saltem honesto aliquo mortis genere affectus est? &c. *Lact.* iv. 26. *Just. M. Dial.* p. 317.

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in holy Scripture, or bearing conformity to its doctrine, why it was thus ordered. Such are these.

1. As our Saviour freely did undertake a life of greatest meanness and hardship, so upon the like accounts he might be pleased to undergo a death most loathsome and uncomfortable. There is nothing to man's nature, (especially to the best natures, in which modesty and ingenuity do survive) more abominable than such a death. God for good purposes hath planted in our constitution a quick sense of disgrace; and, of all disgraces, that which proceedeth from an imputation of crimes is most pungent; and being conscious of our innocence doth heighten the smart; and to reflect upon ourselves dying under it, leaving the world with an indelible stain upon our name and memory, is yet more grievous. Even to languish by degrees, enduring the torments of a long, however sharp disease, would to an honest mind seem more eligible, than in this manner, being reputed and handled as a villain, to find a quick and easy dispatch.

Of which human resentment may we not observe a touch in that expostulation, *Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?* If as a man he did not like to be prosecuted as a thief; yet willingly did he choose it, as he did other most distasteful things pertaining to our nature, (*the likeness of man,*) and incident to that low condition, (*the form of a servant,*) into which he did put himself: such as were, to endure penury, and to fare hardly, to be slighted, envied, hated, reproached through all his course of life.

Luke xxii. 52. Matt. xxvi. 55.

It is well said by a Pagan philosopher, that *no man doth express such a respect and devotion to virtue, as doth he who forfeiteth the repute of being a good man, that he may not lose the conscience of being such*[y]. This our Lord willingly made his case, being content not only to expose his life, but to prostitute his fame, for the interests of goodness.

[y] Nemo mihi videtur pluris æstimare virtutem, nemo illi magis esse devotus, quam qui boni viri famam perdidit, ne conscientiam perderet. *Sen. Ep.* 81.

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Had he died otherwise, he might have seemed to purchase our welfare at a somewhat easier rate; he had not been so complete a sufferer; he had not tasted the worst that man is liable to endure: there had been a comfort in seeming innocent, detracting from the perfection of his sufferance.

John v. 18. viii. 37, 40, 59. vii. 1, 19, 25. x. 32, 39.

Whereas therefore he often was in hazard of death, both from the clandestine machinations and the outrageous violences of those who maligned him, he did industriously shun a death so plausible, and honourable, if I may so speak; it being not so disgraceful to fall by private malice, or by sudden rage, as by the solemn deliberate proceeding of men in public authority and principal credit.

John vi. 64.

Accordingly this kind of death did not fall upon him by surprise, or by chance; but he did *from the beginning* foresee it; he plainly with satisfaction did aim at it: he, as it is related in the Gospels, did *shew* his disciples, that it was incumbent on him by God's appointment and his own choice; that *he ought*, it is said, *to suffer many things, to be rejected by the chief priests, elders, and scribes, to be vilified by them, to be delivered up to the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified*, as a flagitious slave. Thus would our blessed Saviour, in conformity to the rest of his voluntary afflictions, and for a consummation of them, not only suffer in his body by sore wounds and bruises, and in his soul by doleful agonies, but in his name also and reputation by the foulest scandals; undergoing as well all the infamy as the infirmity which did belong to us, or might befall us: thus meaning by all means throughly to express his charity, and exercise his compassion towards us; thus advancing his merit, and discharging the utmost satisfaction in our behalf.

Matt xvi. 21. Luke ix. 22. xviii. 32, 33. Mark ix. 31.

2. Death passing on him as a malefactor by public sentence, did best suit to the nature of his undertaking, was most congruous to his intent, did most aptly represent what he was doing, and imply the reason of his performance. For we are all guilty in a most high degree, and in a manner very notorious; the foulest shame, together with the

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sharpest pain, is due to us for affronting our glorious Maker; we deserve an open condemnation and exemplary punishment: wherefore he, undertaking in our stead to bear all, and fully to satisfy for us, was pleased to undergo the like judgment and usage; being termed, being treated as we should have been, in quality of an heinous malefactor, as we in truth are. What we had really acted in dishonouring and usurping upon God, in disordering the world, in perverting others, that was imputed to him; and the punishment due to that guilt was inflicted on him. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* He therefore did not only sustain an equivalent pain for us, but in a sort did bear an equal blame with us, before God and man.

Isa. liii. 6.

3. Seeing, *by the determinate counsel of God*, it was appointed that our Lord should die for us, and that not in a natural, but violent way, so as perfectly to satisfy God's justice, to vindicate his honour, to evidence both his indignation against sin, and willingness to be appeased; it was most fit that affair should be transacted in a way wherein God's right is most nearly concerned, and his providence most plainly discernible; wherein it should be most apparent that God did exact and inflict the punishment, that our Lord did freely yield to it, and submissively undergo it, upon those very accounts. All *judgment*, as Moses of old did say, *is God's*, or is administered by authority derived from him, in his name, for his interest; all magistrates being his officers and instruments, whereby he governeth and ordereth the world, his natural kingdom: whence that which is acted in way of formal judgment by persons in authority, God himself may be deemed in a more special and immediate manner to execute it, as being done by his commission, in his stead, on his behalf, with his peculiar superintendence. It was therefore in our Lord a signal act of deference to God's authority and justice, becoming the person sustained by him of our Mediator and Proxy, to undergo such a judgment, and such a punishment; whereby he received a doom

Acts ii. 23.

Deut. i. 17.

from God's own mouth, uttered by his ministers, and bare the stroke of justice from God's hand, represented by his instruments. Whence very seasonably and patiently did he reply to Pilate, *Thou hadst no power over me*, (or *against me*) *except it were given thee from above:* implying that it was in regard to the originally supreme authority of God his father, and to his particular appointment upon this occasion, that our Saviour did then frankly subject himself to those inferior powers, as to the proper ministers of divine justice. Had he suffered in any other way, by the private malice or passion of men, God's special providence in that case had been less visible, and our Lord's obedience not so remarkable. And if he must die by public hands, it must be as a criminal, under a pretence of guilt and demerit; there must be a formal process, how full soever of mockery and outrage; there must be testimonies produced, how void soever of truth or probability; there must be a sentence pronounced, although most corrupt and injurious: for no man is in this way persecuted, without colour of desert: otherwise it would cease to be public authority, and become lawless violence; the persecutor then would put off the face of a magistrate, and appear as a cut-throat or a robber.

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John xix. 11. κατ' ἐμοῦ.

4. In fine, our Saviour hardly with such advantage, in any other way, could have displayed all kinds of virtue and goodness, to the honour of God, to the edification of men, to the furtherance of our salvation.

The judgment-hall, with all the passages leading him thither, and thence to execution, attended wth guards of soldiers, amidst the crowds and clamours of people, were as so many theatres, on which he had opportune convenience, in the full eye of the world, to act divers parts of sublimest virtue: to express its insuperable constancy, in attesting truth, and maintaining a good conscience; his meekness, in calmly bearing the greatest wrongs; his patience, in contentedly enduring the saddest adversities; his entire resignation to the will and providence of God; his peaceable submission to the law and power of man; his admirable charity, in pitying, in excusing, in obliging

John xviii. 37. 1 Tim. vi. 13.

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those by his good wishes, and earnest prayers for their pardon, who in a manner so injurious, so despiteful, so cruel, did persecute him, yea, in gladly suffering all this from their hands for their salvation; his unshakeable faith in God, and unaltered love toward him, under so fierce a trial, so dreadful a temptation. All these excellent virtues and graces, by the matter being thus ordered, in a degree most eminent, and in a manner very conspicuous, were demonstrated to the praise of God's name, and the commendation of his truth; for the settlement of our faith and hope, for an instruction and an encouragement to us of good practice in those highest instances of virtue.

It is a passable notion among the most eminent Pagan sages, that no very exemplary virtue can well appear otherwise than in notable misfortune. Whence it is said in Plato, that to approve a man heartily *righteous, he must be scourged, tortured, bound, have his two eyes burnt out, and in the close, having suffered all evils, must be impaled,* or crucified [z]. And, *It was,* saith Seneca, *the cup of poison which made Socrates a great man,* and *which out of prison did transfer him to heaven* [a], or did procure to him that lofty esteem, affording him opportunity to signalize his constancy, his equanimity, his unconcernedness for this world and life. And, *The virtue,* saith he again, *and the innocence of Rutilius would have lain hid, if it had not* (by condemnation and exile) *received injury; while it was violated, it brightly shone forth* [b]. And he that said this of others, was himself in nothing so illustrious, as in handsomely entertaining that death to which he was by the bloody tyrant adjudged. And generally, the most honourable persons in the judgment of posterity for gallant

[z] Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit. *Sen. de Prov.* c. 3.

Ὁ δίκαιος μαστιγώσεται, στρεβλώσεται, δεδήσεται, ἐκκαυθήσεται τὼ ὀφθαλμώ, τελευτῶν πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀνασχινδιλευθήσεται. *Plat. de Rep.* 2.

[a] Cicuta magnum Socratem fecit. *Sen. Ep.* 13.

Calix venenatus, qui Socratem transtulit e carcere in cœlum. *Sen. Ep.* 67.

Æqualis fuit in tanta inæqualitate fortunæ, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 104.

[b] Rutilii innocentia ac virtus lateret, nisi accepissit injuriam; dum violatur, effulsit. *Sen. Ep.* 79.

worth, to this very end (as such philosophers teach) were by divine Providence delivered up to suffer opprobrious condemnations and punishments, by the ingrateful malignity of their times. So that the Greeks, in consistence with their own wisdom and experience, could not reasonably scorn that cross which our good Lord (did not only, as did their best worthies, by forcible accidental constraint undergo, but) advisedly by free choice did undertake, to recommend the most excellent virtues to imitation, and to promote the most noble designs that could be, by its influence. SERM. XXXII. Sen. de Prov. 2, 3. &c. Plut. de Stoic. Contr. Ep. 1931.

So great reason there was, that our Lord should thus suffer as a criminal.

II. We may consider, that in that kind his suffering was most bitter and painful. Easily we may imagine what acerbity of pain must be endured by our Lord, in his tender limbs being stretched forth, racked, and tentered, and continuing for a good time in such a posture; by the *piercing his hands and his feet*, parts very nervous and exquisitely sensible, with sharp nails, (so that, as it is said of Joseph, *the iron entered into his soul;*) by abiding exposed to the injuries of the sun scorching, the wind beating, the weather searching his grievous wounds and sores. Such a pain it was; and that no stupifying, no transient pain, but one both very acute and lingering: for we see, that he together with his fellow-sufferers had both presence of mind and time to discourse. Even six long hours did he remain under such torture, sustaining in each moment of them beyond the pangs of an ordinary death. But as the case was so hard and sad, so the reason of it was great, and the fruit answerably good. Our Saviour did embrace such a passion, that, in being thus content to endure the most intolerable smarts for us, he might demonstrate the vehemence of his love; that he might signify the heinousness of our sins, which deserved that from such a person so heavy punishment should be exacted; that he might appear to yield a valuable compensation for those pains which we should have suffered; that he throughly might exemplify the hardest duties of obedience and patience. Ps. xxii. 16. Ps. cv. 18. Mark xv. 25, 34.

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III. This manner of suffering was (as most sharp and afflictive, so) most vile and shameful; being proper to the basest condition of the worst men, and unworthy of a freeman, however nocent and guilty [c]. It was *servile supplicium*, a punishment never by the Romans, under whose law our Lord suffered, legally inflicted upon freemen, but upon slaves only; that is, upon people scarcely regarded as men, having in a sort forfeited or lost themselves. And among the Jews that execution which most approached thereto, and in part agreed with it, (for their law did not allow any so inhuman punishment,) hanging up the dead bodies of some that had been put to death, was held most infamous and execrable: for, *Cursed*, said the law, *is every one that hangeth upon a tree;* cursed, that is, devoted to reproach and malediction; *Accursed by God*, saith the Hebrew, that is, seeming to be rejected by God, and by his special order exposed to affliction.

Deut. xxi. 23.

Gal. iii. 13.

Τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον τῆς τελευτῆς τὸ εἶδος ὑπὸ ἀρὰν ἔκειτο.

Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 71.

Indeed, according to the course of things, to be set on high, and for continuance of time to be objected to the view of all that pass by, in that calamitous posture, doth infuse bad suspicion, doth provoke censure, doth invite contempt and scorn, doth naturally draw forth language of derision, despite, and detestation; especially from the inconsiderate, hard-hearted, and rude vulgar, which commonly doth think, speak, and deal according to event and appearance: (—*Sequitur fortunam semper, et odit damnatos*—) whence θεατρίζεσθαι, *to be made a gazing-stock*, or an object of reproach to the multitude, is by the Apostle mentioned as an aggravation of the hardships endured by the primitive Christians. And thus in extremity did it befall our Lord: for we read, that the people did in that condition mock, jeer, and revile him, drawing up their noses, abusing him by scurrilous gestures, letting out their virulent and wanton tongues against him; so as to verify that prediction, *I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people: All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they*

Heb. x. 33.

Ἐξεμυκτήριζον· ἐνέπαιζον· ἐβλασφήμουν.

Luke xxiii. 35, 36.

Matt. xxvii. 39.

Ps. xxii. 6, 7, 8.

[c] Quod etiam homine libero, quamvis nocente, videatur indignum. *Lact.* iv. 26.

shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

The same persons who formerly had admired his glorious works, who had been ravished with his excellent discourses, who had followed and favoured him so earnestly, who had blessed and magnified him, (*for he*, saith St. Luke, *taught in the synagogues, being glorified by all*,) even those very persons did then behold him with pitiless contempt and despite. In correspondence to that prophecy, *they look and stare upon me*, εἰσήκει ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν, *the people stood gazing* on him, in a most scornful manner, venting contemptuous and spiteful reproaches; as we see reported in the Evangelical story.

Matt. ix. 33. xxi. 9. xii. 23. Luke iv. 15. Ps. xxii. 17. Luke xxiii. 35.

Thus did our blessed Saviour *endure the cross, despising the shame*. *Despising the shame*, that is, not simply disregarding it, or (with a stoical haughtiness, with a cynical immodesty, with a stupid carelessness) slighting it as no evil; but not eschewing it, or not rating it for so great an evil, that to decline it he would neglect the prosecution of his great and glorious designs.

Heb. xii. 2.

There is innate to man an aversion and abhorrency from disgraceful abuse, no less strong than are the like antipathies to pain: whence *cruel mockings and scourgings* are coupled as ingredients of the sore persecutions sustained by God's faithful martyrs. And generally men with more readiness will embrace, with more contentedness will endure the cruelty of the latter, than of the former; pain not so smartly affecting the lower sense, as being insolently contemned doth grate upon the fancy, and wound even the mind itself. For, *the wounds* of infamy *do*, as the Wise Man telleth us, *go down into the innermost parts of the belly*, reaching the very heart, and touching the soul to the quick.

Heb. xi. 36. Prov. xviii. 8. xii. 18.

We therefore need not doubt, but that our Saviour as a man, endowed with human passions, was sensible of this natural evil; and that such indignities did add somewhat of loathsomeness to his cup of affliction; especially considering, that his great charity disposed him to grieve, observing men to act so indecently, so unworthily, so un-

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justly toward him: yet in consideration of the glory that would thence accrue to God, of the benefit that would redound to us, of the *joy that was set before him*, when *he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*, he most willingly did accept, and most gladly did comport with it.

Heb. xii. 2. Isa. liii. 11.

Gal. iii. 13. *He became a curse for us*, exposed to malediction and reviling; he *endured the contradiction*, or obloquy, *of sinful men:* he was *despised, rejected, and disesteemed of men:* he in common apprehension was deserted by God, according to that of the prophet, *We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;* himself even seeming to concur in that opinion. So was he *made a curse for us*, that *we*, as the Apostle teacheth, might *be redeemed from the curse of the law;* that is, that we might be freed from the exemplary punishment due to our transgressions of the law, with the displeasure of God appearing therein, and the disgrace before the world attending it. He chose thus to *make himself of no reputation*, vouchsafing to be dealt with as a wretched slave, and a wicked miscreant, that we might be exempted, not only from the torment, but also from the ignominy which we had merited: that together with our life, our safety, our liberty, we might even recover that honour which we had forfeited and embezzled.

Heb. xii. 3. Isa. liii. 3. Isa. liii. 4. Gal. iii. 13. Phil. ii. 7.

But lest any should be tempted not sufficiently to value these sufferances of our Lord, as not so rare, but that other men have tasted the like; lest any should presume to compare them with afflictions incident to other persons, as Celsus did compare them with those of Anaxarchus and Epictetus; it is requisite to consider some remarkable particulars about them.

Orig. c. Cels. vii. p. 368.

We may then consider, that not only the infinite dignity of his person, and the perfect innocency of his life, did enhance the price of his sufferings; but some endowments peculiar to him, and some circumstances adhering to his design, did much augment their force.

He was not only, according to the frame and temper of human nature, sensibly touched with the pain, the shame, the whole combination of disasters apparently

waiting on his passion; as God (when he did insert sense and passion into our nature, ordering objects to affect them,) did intend we should be, and as other men in like circumstances would have been; but in many respects beyond that ordinary rate: so that no man, we may suppose, could have felt such grief from them as he did, no man ever hath been sensible of any thing comparable to what he did endure; that passage being truly applicable to him, *Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger;* as that unparalleled *sweating out great lumps of blood* may argue; and as the terms expressing his resentments do intimate. For, in respect of present evils, he said of himself, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful to death;* he is said ἀδημονεῖν, *to be in great anguish* and anxiety, to be in *an agony* or pang of sorrow. In regard to mischiefs which he saw coming on, he is said to be *disturbed in spirit*, and to be *sore amazed*, or dismayed at them. To such an exceeding height did the sense of incumbent evils, and the prospect of impendent calamities, the apprehension of his case, together with a reflection on our condition, screw up his affections.

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Lam. i. 12.

Luke xxii. 44.

Matt. xxvi. 37, 38. John xiii. 21. xii. 27. Mark xiv. 33.

And no wonder that such a burden, even the weight of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) that ever were committed by mankind, by appropriation of them to himself, lying on his shoulders, he should feel it heavy, or seem to crouch and groan under it; that in the mystical Psalm, applied by the Apostle to him, he should cry out, *Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart faileth me.* The sight of God's indignation, so dreadfully flaming out against sin, might well astonish and terrify him: to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell belching fire and brimstone in his face; to lie down in the hottest furnace of divine vengeance; to quench with his own heart-blood the wrath of heaven, and the infernal fire, (as he did in regard to those

Heb. x. 5.

Psal. xl. 12.

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who will not rekindle them to themselves,) might well in the heart of a man beget unconceivable and unexpressible pressures of affliction. When such a Father (so infinitely good and kind to him, whom he so dearly and perfectly loved,) did hide his face from him, did frown on him, how could he otherwise than be mightily troubled? Is it strange that so hearty a love, so tender a pity, contemplating our sinfulness, and experimenting our wretchedness, should be deeply touched? To see, I say, so plainly, to feel so throughly the horrible blindness, the folly, the infidelity, the imbecility, the ingratitude, the incorrigibility, the strange perverseness, perfidiousness, malice, and cruelty of mankind in so many instances, (in the treason of Judas, in the denial of Peter, in the desertion of all the Apostles, in the spite and rage of the persecutors, in the falsehood of the witnesses, in the abuses of the people, in the compliance of Pilate, in a general conspiracy of friends and foes to sin,) all these surrounding him, all invading him, all discharging themselves upon him; would it not astone a mind so pure? would it not wound a heart so tender and full of charity?

Surely, any of those persons who fondly do pretend unto, or vainly do glory in, a sullen apathy, or a stubborn contempt of the evils incident to our nature and state, would in such a case have been utterly dejected: the most resolved philosopher would have been dashed into confusion at the sight, would have been crushed into desperation under the sense of those evils which did assault him.

With the greatness of the causes, the goodness of his constitution did conspire to increase his sufferings. For surely, as his complexion was most pure and delicate, his spirit most vivid and apprehensive, his affections most pliant and tractable; so accordingly would the impressions upon him be most sensible, and consequently the pains which he felt (in body or soul) most afflictive.

That we in like cases are not alike moved, that we do not tremble at the apprehensions of God's displeasure, that we are not affrighted with the sense of our sins, that we do not with sad horror resent our danger and our mi-

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sery, doth arise from that we have very glimmering and faint conceptions of those matters; or that they do not in so clear and lively a manner strike our fancy; (not appearing in their true nature and proper shape, so heinous and so hideous as they really are in themselves and in their consequences;) or because we have but weak persuasions about them; or because we do but slightly consider them; or from that our hearts are very hard and callous, our affections very cold and dull, so that nothing of this nature (nothing beside gross material affairs) can mollify or melt them; or for that we have in us small love to God, and a slender regard to our own welfare; in fine, for that in spiritual matters we are neither so wise, so sober, so serious, nor so good or ingenuous, in any reasonable measure, as we should be. But our Saviour, in all those respects, was otherwise disposed. He most evidently discerned the wrath of God, the grievousness of sin, the wretchedness of man, most truly, most fully, most strongly represented to his mind: he most firmly believed, yea most certainly knew, whatever God's law had declared about them: he did exactly consider and weigh them: his heart was most soft and sensible, his affections were most quick and excitable by their due objects: he was full of dutiful love to God, and most ardently desirous of our good, bearing a more than fraternal good-will towards us. Whence it is not so marvellous that as a man, as a transcendently wise and good man, he was so vehemently affected by those occurrences, that his imagination was so troubled, and his passions so stirred by them; so that he thence did suffer in a manner and to a degree unconceivable; according to that ejaculation in the Greek liturgies, Διὰ τῶν ἀγνώστων σε παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Χριστέ, *By thy unknown sufferings, O Christ, have mercy on us.* But farther,

IV. We may consider, that this way of suffering had in it some particular advantages, conducing to the accomplishment of our Lord's principal designs.

Its being very notorious, and lasting a competent time, were good advantages. For if he had been privately made away, or suddenly dispatched, no such great notice would

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have been taken of it, nor would the matter of fact have been so fully proved, to the confirmation of our faith, and conviction of infidelity; nor had that his excellent deportment under such bitter affliction (his most divine patience, meekness, and charity) so illustriously shone forth. Wherefore, to prevent all exceptions, and excuses of unbelief, (together with other collateral good purposes,) divine Providence did so manage the business, that as the course of his life, so also the manner of his death, should be most conspicuously remarkable. *I spake freely to the world, and in secret have I done nothing*, said he himself: and, *These things*, said St. Paul to king Agrippa, *were not done in a corner.* Such were the proceedings of his life, not close or clancular, but frank and open; not presently hushed up, but leisurely carried on in the face of the world, that men might have the advantage to observe and examine them. And as he lived, so he died, most publicly and visibly; the world being witness of his death, and so prepared to believe his resurrection, and thence disposed to embrace his doctrine: according to what he did foretel, *I, being lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to me:* for he drew all men, by so obvious a death, to take notice of it; he drew all well-disposed persons, from the wondrous consequences of it, to believe on him. And, *As*, said he again, *Moses did exalt the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be exalted.* As the elevation of that mysterious serpent did render it visible, and did attract the eyes of people toward it; whereby, God's power, invisibly accompanying that sacramental performance, they were cured of those mortiferous stings, which they had received: so our Lord, being mounted on the cross, allured the eyes of men to behold him, and their hearts to close with him; whereby, the heavenly virtue of God's Spirit co-operating, they became saved from those destructive sins, which from the Devil's serpentine instigations they had incurred.

John xviii. 20. Acts xxvi. 26.

John xii. 32. (Iren. ii. 26.)

John iii. 14. Iren. iv. 5.

Another advantage of this kind of suffering was, that by it the nature of that kingdom, which he did intend to erect, was evidently signified: that it was not such as the

carnal people did expect, an external, earthly, temporal kingdom, consisting in domination over the bodies and estates of men, dignified by outward wealth and splendour, managed by worldly power and policy, promoted by forcible compulsion and terror of arms, affording the advantages of safety, quiet, and prosperity here; but a kingdom purely spiritual, celestial, eternal; consisting in the governance of men's hearts and minds; adorned with the endowments of wisdom and virtue; administered by the conduct and grace of God's holy Spirit; upheld and propagated by meek instruction, by virtuous example, by hearty devotion, and humble patience; rewarding its loyal subjects with spiritual joys and consolations now, with heavenly rest and bliss hereafter. No other kingdom could he presume to design, who submitted to this dolorous and disgraceful way of suffering; no other exploits could he pretend to achieve by expiring on a cross; no other way could he rule, who gave himself to be managed by the will of his adversaries; no other benefits would this forlorn case allow him to dispense. So that well might he then assert, *My kingdom is not of this world;* when he was going in this signal way to demonstrate that important truth. SERM. XXXII. John xviii. 36.

It was also a most convenient touchstone to prove the genuine disposition and worth of men; so as to discriminate those wise, sober, ingenuous, sincere, generous souls, who could discern true goodness through so dark a cloud, who could love it though so ill-favouredly disfigured, who could embrace and avow it notwithstanding so terrible disadvantages: It served, I say, to distinguish those *blessed* ones, who *would not be offended in him*, or by *the scandal of the cross* be discouraged from adhering to him, from the crew of blind, vain, perverse, haughty people, who, being scandalized at his adversity, would contemn and reject him. Luke ii. 35. Matt. xi. 6. Gal. v. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. i. 23.

Another considerable advantage was this, that by it God's special providence was discovered, and his glory illustrated in the propagation of the Gospel. For how Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. 61.

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could it be, that a person of so low parentage, of so mean garb, of so poor condition, who underwent so lamentable and despicable a kind of death, falling under the pride and spite of his enemies, so easily should gain so general an opinion in the world (even among the best, the wisest, the greatest persons) of being *the Lord of life and glory?* How, I say, could it happen, that such a miracle could be effected without God's aid and special concurrence? That king Herod, who from a long reign in flourishing state, with prosperous success in his enterprises, did attain the name of Great; or that Vespasian, who triumphantly did ascend the imperial throne, should either of them, by a few admirers of worldly vanity, seriously be held, or in flattery be called the Messias, is not so strange: but that one who was trampled on so miserably, and treated as a wretched caitiff, should instantly conquer innumerable hearts, and, from such a depth of extreme adversity, should be advanced to the sublimest pitch of glory; that *the stone which the builders* with so much scorn, *did refuse*, should *become the head-stone of the corner; this* (with good assurance we may say,) *was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* Hereby indeed *the excellency of divine power* and wisdom was much glorified: by so impotent, so improbable, so implausible means accomplishing so great effects; subduing the world to obedience of God, not by the active valour of an illustrious hero, but through the patient submission of a poor, abused, and oppressed person; restoring mankind to life and happiness by the sorrowful death of a crucified Saviour.

1 Cor. ii. 8. Jam. ii. 1.

Psal. cxviii. 22, 23.

2 Cor iv. 7. 1 Cor. i. 27.

V. Lastly, the consideration of our Lord's suffering in this manner is very useful in application to our practice: no point is more fruitful of wholesome instruction, none is more forcible to kindle devout affections, none can afford more efficacious inducements and incentives to a pious life. For what virtue will not a serious meditation on the cross be apt to breed and to cherish? To what duty will it not engage and excite us?

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1. Are we not hence infinitely obliged, with most humble affection and hearty gratitude, to adore each Person of the blessed Trinity?

That God the Father should design such a redemption for us; *not sparing his own Son, (the Son of his love,* dear to him as himself,) but *delivering him up for us,* to be thus dealt with for our sake: that God would endure to see his Son in so pitiful a condition, to hear him groaning under so grievous pressures, to let him be so horribly abused; and that for us, who deserved nothing from him, who had demerited so much against him; for us, who were no friends to him, (for *even when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;*) who were not any ways commendable for goodness or righteousness: (for *Christ did suffer for sinners, the just for the unjust;* and *God commended his love to us, that while we were sinful, Christ died for us:*) that God thus should *love us, sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins,* in so dismal a way of suffering, how stupendous is that goodness! How vast an obligation doth it lay upon us to reciprocal affection! If we do owe all to God, as our maker, from whose undeserved bounty we did receive all that we have; how much farther do we stand indebted to him as the author of our redemption, from whose ill-deserved mercy we receive a new being, and better state; and that in a way far more obliging! For God created us with a word, without more cost or trouble: but to redeem us stood him in huge expences and pains; no less than the debasing of his only Son to our frailty, the exposing him to more than our misery, the withdrawing his face and restraining his bowels from his best beloved. If a Jew then were commanded by law, if a Gentile were obliged by nature, to *love God with all his heart and all his soul;* what affection doth a Christian, under the law and duty of grace, owe unto him? By what computation can we reckon that debt? What faculties have we sufficient to discharge it? What finite heart can hold an affection commensurate to such an obligation?

Rom. viii. 32. Col. i. 13.

Rom. v. 10.

1 Pet. iii. 18. Rom. v. 6. 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 10.

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Eph. iii. 19. v. 2, 25. Gal ii. 20. Apoc i. 5. John xv. 13. ἀδεὶς ἔχει, να τὶς ——

And how can it otherwise than inflame our heart with love toward the blessed Son of God, our Saviour, to consider that, merely out of charitable pity toward us, he purposely came down from heaven, and took our flesh upon him, that he might therein undergo those extreme acerbities of pain, and those most ugly indignities of shame for us? *Greater love*, said he, *hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* But that God should lay down his life, should pour forth his blood, should be aspersed with the worst crimes, and clothed with foulest shame, should be executed on a cross as a malefactor and a slave, for his enemies and rebellious traitors, what imagination can devise any expression of charity or friendship comparable to this? Wherefore if love naturally be productive of love, if friendship justly meriteth a correspondence in good-will, what effect should the consideration of so ineffable a love, of so unparalleled friendship, have upon us?

How can any serious reflection on this event fail to work hearty gratitude in us toward our good Lord? For put case any person for our sake (that he might rescue us from the greatest mischiefs, and purchase for us the highest benefits) willingly should deprive himself of all his estate, (and that a very large one,) of his honour, (and that a very high one,) of his ease and pleasure, (and those the most perfect and assured that could be;) that he should expose himself to the greatest hazards, should endure the sorest pains and most disgraceful ignominies; should prostitute his life, and in most hideous manner lose it, merely for our sake: should we not then apprehend and confess ourselves monstrously ingrateful, if we did not most deeply resent such kindness; if upon all occasions we did not express our thankfulness for it; if we did not ever readily yield all the acknowledgment and all the requital we were able? The case in regard to our blessed Saviour is like in kind; but in degree, whatever we can suppose doth infinitely fall below the performances of him for us, who stooped from the top of heaven, who laid aside the majesty and the felicity of God, for the infamies and the

dolours of a cross, that he might redeem us from the torments of hell, and instate us in the joys of paradise. So that our obligations of gratitude to him are unexpressibly great; and we cannot with any face deny ourselves to be most basely unworthy, if the effects in our heart and life be not answerable. SERM. XXXII.

Nor should we forget, that also upon this account we do owe great love and thanks to God the Holy Ghost, who, as he did originally conspire in the wonderful project of our redemption, as he did executively by miraculous operation conduct our Saviour into his fleshly tabernacle, as he did by unmeasurable communications of divine virtue assist his humanity through all the course of his life; so in this juncture he did inspire him with charity more than human, and did support him to undergo those pressures with invincible patience; and so did sanctify all this sacerdotal performance, that our Lord, as the Apostle doth affirm, *did through the eternal Spirit offer himself without spot to God.* John iii. 34. Heb. ix. 14.

2. What surer ground can there be of faith in God, what stronger encouragement of hope, than is suggested by this consideration? For if God steadfastly did hold his purpose, and faithfully did accomplish his word in an instance so distasteful to his own heart and bowels; how can we ever suspect his constancy and fidelity in any case? how can we distrust the completion of any divine promise? 1 Pet. 1. 20. Ephes. i. 4. Luke i. 70.

If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, to the suffering of so contumelious affliction; how can we any ways be diffident of his bounty, or despair of his mercy? *how*, as the Apostle doth argue, *shall he not also with him freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32.

If ever we be tempted to doubt of God's goodness, will not this experiment thereof convince and satisfy us? For what higher kindness could God express, what lower condescension could he vouchsafe, by what pledge could he more clearly or surely testify his willingness and his delight to do us good, than by thus ordering his dearest Son to undergo such miseries for us?

If the greatness of our sins discourageth us from eter-

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taining comfortable hopes of mercy, will it not rear our hearts, to consider that such a punishment hath been inflicted to expiate them, which might content the most rigorous severity; that such a price is laid down to *redeem us from the curse*, which richly may suffice to discharge it; that such a sacrifice hath been offered, which God hath avowed for most available, and acceptable to himself? So that now what can justice exact more from us? What have we farther to do, than with a penitent and thankful heart to embrace the mercy purchased for us? *Who is he that condemneth*, seeing *Christ hath died*, and *hath his own self borne our sins in his own body on the tree?* Whatever the wounds of our conscience be, is not *the blood of the cross*, tempered with our hearty repentance, and applied by a lively faith, a sovereign balsam of virtue sufficient to cure them? And may we not *by his stripes be healed?* Have we not abundant reason, with the holy Apostle, to *joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have received the atonement?* Is it not to depreciate the worth, to disparage the efficacy of our Lord's passion, any ways to despair of mercy, or to be disconsolate for guilt; as if the cross were not enough worthy to compensate for our unworthiness, or our Saviour's patience could not balance our disobedience?

Quis de se desperet, pro quo tam humilis esse voluit Filius Dei? *Aug. de Ag. Chr.* c. 11.

Gal iii. 13. Ephes. v 2. 1 Pet. i. 19 Rom. viii. 34. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

1 Pet. ii. 24. Rom. v. 11.

3. It indeed may yield great joy and sprightly consolation to us, to contemplate our Lord upon the cross, exercising his immense charity toward us, transacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies, and evacuating all the obstacles of our salvation.

May we not delectably consider him as there stretching forth his arms of kindness, with them to embrace the world, and to receive all mankind under the wings of his protection? as there spreading out his hands, with them earnestly inviting and entreating us to accept the overtures of grace, procured by him for us?

Extendit in passione manus suas, &c. *Lact.* iv. 26 Isa. lxv. 2.

Is it not sweet and satisfactory, to view our great High Priest on that high altar offering up his own pure flesh, and pouring out his precious blood, as an universal complete sacrifice, propitiatory for the sins of mankind?

Lev. ix. 22. Chrys. Tom. Or. 82. Pope Leo I.

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Is it not a goodly object to behold humility and patience so gloriously rearing themselves above all worldly, all infernal pride and insolence; by the cross ascending unto the celestial throne of dignity and majesty superlative?

Is it not pleasant to contemplate our Lord there standing erect, not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a noble conqueror, where *having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a solemn show, triumphing over them?* Did ever any conqueror, loftily seated in his triumphal chariot, yield a spectacle so gallant and magnificent? Was ever tree adorned with trophies so pompous and splendid? Col. ii. 15.

To the exterior view and carnal sense of men, our Lord was then indeed exposed to scorn and shame; but to spiritual and sincere discerning, all his and our enemies did there hang up as objects of contempt, utterly overthrown and undone.

There the Devil, that *strong* and sturdy *one*, did hang up bound in chains, disarmed and rifled, quite baffled and confounded, mankind being rescued from his tyrannic power. Ὁ ἰσχυρός. Matt. xii. 29. Luke xi. 21, 22. Heb. ii. 14.

There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its bewitching pleasures, its fondly admired excellencies, did hang up, all defaced and disparaged; as it appeared to St. Paul: for *God*, saith he, *forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.* Gal. vi. 14.

There, in a most lively representation, and most admirable pattern, was exhibited *the mortification of our flesh, with its affections and lusts;* and our *old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed.* Gal. ii. 20. v. 24. Col. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 13.

There our sins, being, as St. Peter telleth us, *carried up by him unto the gibbet*, did hang as marks of his victorious prowess, as malefactors by him *condemned in the flesh*, as objects of our horror, and hatred. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Rom. viii. 3.

There death itself hung gasping, with its sting pulled out, and all its terrors quelled; his death having prevented ours, and induced immortality. 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 14.

There all wrath, *enmity*, strife, (the banes of comfort- Eph. ii. 15, 16.

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able life,) did hang *abolished in his flesh*, and *slain upon the cross, by the blood whereof he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth.*

Col. i. 20.

There manifold yokes of bondage, instruments of vexation, and principles of variance, even all the *hand-writing of ordinances that was against us*, did hang up, *cancelled* and *nailed to the cross.*

Col. ii. 14.

So much sweet comfort by special consideration may be extracted from this event, which in appearance was most doleful, but in effect the most happy that ever by Providence was dispensed to the world. Farther,

4. This consideration is most useful to render us very humble and sensible of our weakness, our vileness, our wretchedness. For how low was that our fall, from which we could not be raised without such a depression of God's only son? How great is that impotency, which did need such a succour to relieve it? How abominable must be that iniquity, which might not be expiated without so costly a sacrifice? How deplorable is that misery, which could not be removed without commutation of so strange a suffering? Would the Son of God have so *emptied* and abased himself for nothing? Would he have endured such pains and ignominies for a trifle? No, surely; if our guilt had been slight, if our case had been tolerable, the divine wisdom would have chosen a more cheap and easy remedy for us.

Ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε. Phil. ii. 7.

Is it not madness for us to be conceited of any worth in ourselves, to confide in any merit of our works, to glory in any thing belonging to us, to fancy ourselves brave, fine, happy persons, worthy of great respect and esteem; whenas our unworthiness, our demerit, our forlorn estate did extort from the most gracious God a displeasure needing such a reconciliation, did impose upon the most glorious Son of God a necessity to undergo such a punishment in our behalf?

How can we reasonably pretend to any honour, or justly assume any regard to ourselves, whenas the first-born of heaven, *The Lord of glory*, partaker of divine majesty, was fain to *make himself of no reputation*, to put

1 Cor. ii. 8. Phil. ii. 7.

himself into *the garb of a servant*, and, under the imputation of a malefactor, to bear such disgrace and infamy in our room, in lieu of the confusion due to us? SERM. XXXII.

What more palpable confutation can there be of human vanity and arrogance, of all lofty *imaginations*, all presumptuous confidences, all turgid humours, all fond self-pleasings and self-admirings, than is that tragical cross, wherein, as in a glass, our foul deformity, our pitiful meanness, our helpless infirmity, our sad wofulness are so plainly represented? 2 Cor. x. 5.

Well surely may we say with St. Austin, *Let man now at length blush to be proud, for whom God is made so humble.* [And since, as he doth add, *this great disease of soul did bring down the almighty Physician from heaven, did humble him to the form of a servant, did subject him to contumelies, did suspend him on a cross, that this tumour by virtue of so great a medicine might be cured*[d];] may not he well be presumed incurable, who is not cured of his pride by this medicine; in whom neither the reason of the case, nor the force of such an example, can work humility?

5. But farther, while this contemplation doth breed sober humility, it also should preserve us from base abjectness of mind; for it doth evidently demonstrate, that, according to God's infallible judgment, we are very considerable; that our souls are capable of high regard; that it is a great pity we should be lost and abandoned to ruin. For surely, had not God much esteemed and respected us, he would not for our sakes have so debased himself, or deigned to endure so much for our recovery; divine justice would not have exacted or accepted such a ransom for our souls, had they been of little worth. We should not therefore slight ourselves,

[d] Jam tandem erubescat homo esse superbus, propter quem factus est humilis Deus. *Aug. in Ps.* xviii.

Iste ingens morbus omnipotentem Medicum de cœlo deduxit, usque ad formam servi humiliavit, contumeliis egit, ligno suspendit, ut per salutem tantæ medicinæ curetur hic tumor. *Ibid.*

Quæ superbia sanari potest, si humilitate Filii Dei non sanatur? *Aug. de Agone Chr.* cap. xi.

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nor demean ourselves like sorry contemptible wretches, as if we deserved no consideration, no pity from ourselves; as if we thought our souls not worth saving, which yet our Lord thought good to purchase at so dear a rate[e]. By so despising or disregarding ourselves, do we not condemn the sentiments, do we not vilify the sufferings of our Lord; so with a pitiful meanness of spirit joining the most unworthy injustice and ingratitude? Again,

Acts xiii. 46.

6. How can we reflect upon this event without extreme displeasure against, and hearty detestation of our sins? those sins which indeed did bring such tortures and such disgraces upon our blessed Redeemer? Judas, the wretch who betrayed him; the Jewish priests who did accuse and prosecute him; the wicked rout which did abusively insult over him; those cruel hands that smote him; those pitiless hearts that scorned him; those poisonous tongues that mocked him and reviled him; all those who were the instruments and abettors of his affliction, how do we loathe and abhor them! How do we detest their names and execrate their memories! But how much greater reason have we to abominate our sins, which were the true, the principal actors of all that woful tragedy! *He was delivered for our offences:* they were indeed the traitors, which by the hands of Judas delivered him up. *He that knew no sin, was made sin for us;* that is, was accused, was condemned, was executed as a sinner for us. It was therefore we, who by our sins did impeach him; the spiteful priests were but our advocates: we by them did adjudge and sentence him; Pilate was but drawn in against his will and conscience to be our spokesman in that behalf: we by them did inflict that horrid punishment on him; the Roman executioners were but our representatives therein. *He became a curse for us;* that is, all the mockery, derision, and contumely he endured, did proceed from us; the silly people were but

Rom. iv. 25.

2 Cor. v. 21.

Gal. iii. 13.

[e] Aut vero pro minimo habet Deus hominem, propter quem mori voluit Filium suum? *Aug. in Psal.* cxlviii.

Si vobis ex terrena fragilitate viles estis, ex pretio vestro vos æstimate. *Aug.*

properties acting our parts. Our sins were they that cried out, *Crucifige, (Crucify him, crucify him,)* with clamours more loud and more importunate than did all the Jewish rabble; it was they, which by the borrowed throats of that base people did so outrageously persecute him. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities:* it was they, which by the hands of the fierce soldiers, and of the rude populace, as by senseless engines, did buffet and scourge him; they by the nails and thorns did pierce his flesh, and rend his sacred body. Upon them, therefore, it is most just and fit that we should turn our hatred, that we should discharge our indignation. SERM. XXXII. Isa. liii. 5.

7. And what in reason can be more powerful toward working penitential sorrow and remorse, than reflection upon such horrible effects, proceeding from our sins? How can we forbear earnestly to grieve, considering ourselves by them to have been the perfidious betrayers, the unjust slanderers, the cruel persecutors and barbarous murderers of a person so innocent and lovely, so good and benign, so great and glorious; of God's own dear Son, of our best friend, of our most gracious Redeemer?

8. If ingenuity will not operate so far, and hereby melt us into contrition; yet surely this consideration must needs affect us with a religious fear. For can we otherwise than tremble to think upon the heinous guilt of our sins, upon the dreadful fierceness of God's wrath against them, upon the impartial severity of divine judgment for them, all so manifestly discovered, all so livelily set forth in this dismal spectacle? If the view of an ordinary execution is apt to beget in us some terror, some dread of the law, some reverence toward authority; what awful impressions should this singular example of divine justice work upon us? Psal. cxix. 120.

How greatly we should be moved thereby, what affections it should raise in us, we may even learn from the most inanimate creatures: for the whole world did seem affected thereat with horror and confusion; the frame of things was discomposed and disturbed; all nature did feel a kind of compassion and compunction for it. The sun

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(as from aversion and shame) did hide his face, leaving the world covered for three hours with mournful blackness; the bowels of the earth did yearn and quake; the rocks did split; the veil of the temple was rent; the graves did open themselves, and the dead bodies were roused up. And, can we then (who are the most concerned in the event,) be more stupid than the earth, more obdurate than rocks, more drowsy than interred carcases, the most insensible and immoveable things in nature? But, farther,

9. How can the meditation on this event do otherwise than hugely deter us from all wilful disobedience and commission of sin? For how thereby can we violate such engagements, and thwart such an example of obedience? How thereby can we abuse so wonderful goodness, and disoblige so transcendent charity? How thereby can we reject that gentle dominion over us, which our Redeemer did so dearly purchase, or renounce *the Lord that bought us* at so high a rate? With what heart can we bring upon the stage, and act over that direful tragedy, renewing all that pain and all that disgrace to our Saviour; as the Apostle teacheth that we do by apostacy, *crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and puting him to an open shame?* Can we without horror *tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing;* (as the same divine Apostle saith all wilful transgressors do;) vilifying that most sacred and precious blood so freely shed for the demonstration of God's mercy, and ratification of his gracious intentions toward us, as a thing of no special worth or consideration; despising all his so kind and painful endeavours for our salvation; defeating his most charitable purposes and earnest desires for our welfare; rendering all his so bitter and loathsome sufferings in regard to us utterly vain and fruitless, yea indeed very hurtful and pernicious? For if the cross do not save us from our sins, it will much aggravate their guilt, and augment their punishment; bringing a severer condemnation, and a sadder ruin on us. Again,

Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Rom. xiv. 9. 2Cor. v. 15. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Heb. vi. 6. Ἀναστατοῦντες. Heb. x. 26. Ἑκουσίως ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν. ver. 29. Κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος.

10. This consideration affordeth very strong engagements to the practice of charity towards our neighbour.

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For what heart can be so hard, that the blood of the cross cannot mollify into a charitable and compassionate sense? Can we forbear to love those, toward whom our Saviour did bear so tender affection, for whom he was pleased to sustain so woful tortures and indignities? Shall we not, in obedience to his most urgent commands, in conformity to his most notable example, in grateful return to him for his benefits, who thus did gladly suffer for us, discharge this most sweet and easy duty towards his beloved friends? Shall we not be willing, by parting with a little superfluous stuff for the relief of our poor brother, to requite and gratify him, who, to succour us in our distress, most bountifully did part with his wealth, with his glory, with his pleasure, with his life itself? Shall we not meekly comport with an infirmity, not bear a petty neglect, not forgive a small injury to our brother, whenas our Lord did for us and from us bear a cross, to procure remission for our innumerable most heinous affronts and offences against Almighty God? Can a heart void of mercy and pity, with any reason or modesty pretend to the mercies and compassions of the cross? Can we hope, that God for Christ's sake will pardon us, if we for Christ's sake will not forgive our neighbour?

2 Cor. viii. 9.

Eph. iv. 22. Col. iii. 13.

Can we hear our Lord saying to us, *This is my command, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;* and, *Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another?* Can we hear St. Paul exhorting, *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;* and, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak—For even Christ pleased not himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me?* Can we attend to St. John's arguing, *Beloved, if God so loved us, then ought we also to love one another. Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: Wherefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren?*

Joh. xv. 12.

John xiii. 35.

Eph. v. 2.

Rom. xv. 1, 3.

1 Joh. iv. 11. iii. 16.

Can we, I say, consider such precepts, and such discourses, without effectually being disposed to comply

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with them for the sake of our crucified Saviour? all whose life was nothing else but one continual recommendation and enforcement of this duty; but his death especially was a pattern most obliging, most incentive thereto. This use of the point is the more to be regarded, because the Apostle doth apply it hereto, our text coming in upon that occasion; for having pathetically exhorted the Philippians to all kinds of charity and humble condescension, he subjoineth, *Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, &c.*

Phil. ii. 5, 6.

11. But furthermore, what can be more operative than this point toward breeding a disregard of this world, with all its deceitful vanities and mischievous delights; toward reconciling our minds to the worst condition into which it can bring us; toward supporting our hearts under the heaviest pressures of affliction which it can lay upon us? For can we reasonably expect, can we eagerly affect, can we ardently desire great prosperity, whenas the Son of God, our Lord and Master, did only taste such adversity? How can we refuse, in submission to God's pleasure, contentedly to bear a slight grievance, whenas our Saviour gladly did bear a cross, infinitely more distasteful to carnal will and sense than any that can befal us? Who now can admire those splendid trifles, which our Lord never did regard in his life, and which at his death only did serve to mock and abuse him? Who can relish those sordid pleasures, of which he living did not vouchsafe to taste, and the contraries whereof he dying chose to feel in all extremity? Who can disdain or despise a state of sorrow and disgrace, which he, by voluntary susception of it, hath so dignified and graced; by which we so near resemble and become conformable to him; by which we concur and partake with him; yea, by which in some cases we may promote, and after a sort complete his designs, *filling up*, as St. Paul speaketh, *that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh?*

Rom. viii. 17. Phil. iii. 10. Apoc. i. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 13. Col. i. 24.

Who now can hugely prefer being esteemed, approved, favoured, commended by men, before infamy, reproach, derision, and persecution from them; especially when

these do follow conscientious adherence to righteousness? Who can be very ambitious of worldly honour and repute, covetous of wealth, or greedy of pleasure, who doth observe the Son of God choosing rather to hang upon a cross, than to sit upon a throne; inviting the clamours of scorn and spite, rather than acclamations of blessing and praise; divesting himself of all secular power, pomp, plenty, conveniences, and solaces; embracing the garb of a slave, and the repute of a malefactor, before the dignity and respect of a prince, which were his due, which he most easily could have obtained[f]? SERM. XXXII.

Can we imagine it a very happy thing to be high and prosperous in this world, to swim in affluence and pleasure? Can we take it for a misery to be mean and low, to conflict with some wants and straits here; seeing the Fountain of all happiness did himself purposely condescend to so forlorn a state, and was pleased to become so deep a sufferer[g]? If with devout eyes of our mind we do behold our Lord hanging naked upon a gibbet, besmeared all over with streams of his own blood, groaning under smart anguish of pain, encompassed with all sorts of disgraceful abuses, *yielding* (as it was foretold of him) *his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair, hiding not his face from shame and spitting*; will not the imagination of such a spectacle dim the lustre of all earthly grandeurs and beauties, damp the sense of all carnal delights and satisfactions, quash all that extravagant glee which we can find in any wild frolics or riotous merriments? Will it not stain all our pride, and check our wantonness? Will it not dispose our minds to be sober, placing our happiness in things of another nature, seeking our content in matters of higher importance; preferring obedience to the will of God before compliance with the fancies and desires of men; according to that precept of St. Peter, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath* Isa. l. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.

[f] Cogitemus crucem ejus, et divitias lutum esse putabimus. *Hier. ad Nepot.* Epist. 2.

[g] Quis beatam vitam esse arbitretur in iis, quæ contemnenda esse docuit Filius Dei? *Aug. de Ag. Chr.* cap. xi.

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suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind—so as no longer to live the remaining time in the flesh of the lusts of men, but to the will of God?

12. This indeed will instruct and incline us cheerfully to submit unto God's will, and gladly to accept from his hand whatever he disposeth, however grievous and afflictive to our natural will; this point suggesting great commendation of afflictions, and strong consolation under them. For if such hardship was to our Lord himself a school of duty, *he*, as the Apostle saith, *learning obedience from what he suffered;* if it was to him a fit mean of perfection, as the Apostle doth again imply when he saith, *that it became God to perfect the Captain of our salvation by suffering;* if it was an attractive of the divine favour even to him, as those words import, *Therefore the Father loveth me, because I lay down my life;* if it was to him a step toward glory, according to that saying, *Was not Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory?* yea, if it was a ground of conferring on him a sublime pitch of dignity above all creatures, *God for this obedience having exalted him, and given him a name above all names; We seeing Jesus—for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour;* the heavenly society in the Revelations with one voice crying out, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain (who redeemed us to God by his blood) to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing:* if affliction did minister such advantages to him; and if by our conformity to him in undergoing it, (with like equanimity, humility, and patience,) it may afford the like to us; what reason is there that we should anywise be discomposed at it, or disconsolate under it? Much greater reason, surely, there is, that, with St. Paul and all the holy Apostles, we should * rejoice, boast, and exult in our tribulations: far more cause we have, with them, to esteem it a favour, a privilege, an ornament, a felicity to us, than to be displeased and discontented therewith.

To do thus is a duty incumbent on us as Christians. For, † *He*, saith our Master, *that doth not take up his*

Heb. v. 8. ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε.

Heb. ii. 10.

John x. 17.

Luke xxiv. 26.

Phil. ii. 9.

Heb. ii. 9.

Rev. v. 12, 9.

* (Rom. v. 3. Col. i. 24.

Matt. v. 12. Luke vi. 23. Phil. i. 29. Acts v. 41. Jam. i. 2. Heb. x. 34. 1 Pet. i. 7. Heb. xii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 4.) 1 Thess. iii. 3. Rom. viii. 29. Acts xiv. 22. 2 Tim. iii. 12.

† Matt. x. 38. xvi. 24.

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cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me: He that doth not carry his cross, and go after me, cannot be my disciple. He that doth not willingly take the cross, when it is presented to him by God's hand; he that doth not contentedly bear it, when it is by Providence imposed on him, is nowise worthy of the honour to wait on Christ; he is not capable to be reckoned among the disciples of our heavenly Master. He is *not worthy of Christ*, as not having the courage, the constancy, the sincerity of a Christian; or of one pretending to such great benefits, such high privileges, such excellent rewards, as Christ our Lord and Saviour doth propose. He *cannot be Christ's disciple*, shewing such an incapacity to learn those needful lessons of humility and patience, dictated by him; declaring such an indisposition to transcribe those copies of submission to the divine will, self-denial, and self-resignation, so fairly set him by the instruction and example of Christ: for, *Christ*, saith St. Peter, *suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.*

Luke xiv. 27. ix. 23. Greg. Naz. Orat. 38. p. 623.

ὑπογραμμὸν ὑπολιμπάνων.

1 Pet. ii. 21.

13. The willing susception and the cheerful sustenance of the cross, is indeed the express condition, and the peculiar character of our Christianity; in signification whereof, it hath been from most ancient times a constant usage to mark those who enter into it with the figure of it. The cross, as the instrument by which our peace with God was wrought, as the stage whereon our Lord did act the last part of his marvellous obedience, consummating our redemption, as the field wherein the Captain of our salvation did achieve his noble victories, and erect his glorious trophies over all the enemies thereof, was well assumed to be the badge of our profession, the ensign of our spiritual warfare, the pledge of our constant adherence to our crucified Saviour; in relation to whom our chief hope is grounded, our great joy and sole glory doth consist: for, *God forbid*, saith St. Paul, *that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.*

τὸ τρόπαιον τῶ σταυρῶ. Const. Apost. viii. 1

Gal. vi. 14.

14. Let it be *to the Jews a scandal*, (or offensive to their fancy, prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity;) let it be *folly* to

1 Cor. i. 23.

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the Greeks, (or seem absurd to men puffed up and corrupted in mind with fleshly notions and maxims of worldly craft, disposing them to value nothing which is not grateful to present sense or fancy,) that God should put his own most beloved Son into so very sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, glory, and happiness, should issue from these fountains of sorrow and shame; that a person in external semblance devoted to so opprobrious usage, should be the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and Judge of all the world: let, I say, this doctrine be scandalous and distasteful to some persons tainted with prejudice; let it be strange and incredible to others blinded with self-conceit; let all the inconsiderate, all the proud, all the profane part of mankind openly with their mouth, or closely in heart, slight and reject it: yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous; to us it is πιστὸς λόγος, *a faithful*, and most credible *proposition worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, in this way of suffering for them: to us, who discern by a clearer light, and are endowed with a purer sense, kindled by the divine Spirit; from whence we may with comfortable satisfaction of mind apprehend and taste, that God could not in a higher measure, or fitter manner, illustrate his glorious attributes of goodness and justice, his infinite grace and mercy toward his poor creatures, his holy displeasure against wickedness, his impartial severity in punishing iniquity and impiety, or in vindicating his own sacred honour and authority, than by thus ordering his only Son, clothed with our nature, to suffer for us; that also true virtue and goodness could not otherwise be taught, be exemplified, be commended and impressed with greater advantage.

Orig. in Cels. ii. p. 79.

1 Tim. i. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 11.

Since thereby indeed a charity and humanity so unparalleled, (far transcending theirs who have been celebrated for devoting their lives out of love to their country, or kindness to their friends,) a meekness so incomparable, a resolution so invincible, a patience so heroical, were manifested for the instruction and direction of men; since never

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were the vices and the vanities of the world (so prejudicial to the welfare of mankind,) so remarkably discountenanced; since never any suffering could pretend to so worthy and beneficial effects, the expiation of the whole world's sins, and reconciliation of mankind to God, the which no other performance, no other sacrifice did ever aim to procure; since, in fine, no virtue had ever so glorious rewards, as sovereign dignity to him that exercised it, and eternal happiness to those that imitate it; since, I say, there be such excellent uses and fruits of the cross borne by our Saviour, we can have no reason to be offended at it, or ashamed of it; but with all reason heartily should approve and humbly adore the deep wisdom of God, together with all other his glorious attributes displayed therein. To whom therefore, as is most due, let us devoutly render all glory and praise. And,

1 John ii. 2. 2 Cor. v. 19.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

Apoc. i. 5, 6.

Apoc. v. 13.

SERMON XXXIII.

OF DOING ALL IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

COLOSS. iii. 17.

And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

SERM. XXXIII. *WHATSOEVER ye do in word, or deed:* A duty we see the Apostle enjoins us of a large extent, and therefore surely of a great importance; indeed of an universal concernment; such as must go along with, must run through all our words and all our actions. We are therefore much obliged, and much concerned to attend thereto, and to practise it carefully. But first we must understand what it is; the doing whereof depends upon understanding the sense of that phrase, *(doing in the name of Jesus,)* being somewhat ambiguous, and capable of divers meanings; which both in common use and in holy Scriptures we find it to bear, different according to the variety of matters or occasions to which it is applied; most of which are comprehended, and, as it were, complicated in that general one, according to which we may be said to do that in another person's name, which we do with any kind of reference or regard to him; such as our relations, or our obligations to that person do require; and the particular nature of the action doth admit. And according to this acceptation I conceive it safest and best to interpret Saint Paul's meaning here, supposing it to comprehend all the more special and restrained meanings of this phrase, truly applicable to the present matter; of which meanings I shall endeavour in order to propound the chief; and, together, both to unfold and to inculcate the several respective branches of this

duty: yet first of all rejecting one or two, which cannot well be applied to this purpose. SERM. XXXIII.

To do in another's name, doth sometime denote the assuming another's person, or pretending to be the same with him, the very He. So, *many shall come in my name*, prophesied our Saviour, *saying*, *I am Christ*; to do thus in Jesus's name, is the part of an Antichrist and an impostor. That sense therefore hath nothing to do here. Matt. xxiv. 5.

Again; to do in another's name, doth often imply doing *alterius loco*, or *vice*; in another's name, or stead, as a deputy, or substitute; representing the person, or supplying the office of another. So did the Prophets *come, and speak in God's name*; what they declared or enjoined, being therefore said to be declared and enjoined by God himself: *I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking*, (*viz.* by the Prophets, whom he sent, and who are said to come and speak in his name.) And thus the Apostles spake in Christ's name: *We are ambassadors for Christ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled.* Thus also princes govern, and magistrates execute Justice in God's name; whence they are styled gods, as being his lieutenants, administering that judgment which belongs originally and principally to him. Now for this sense, neither is it so proper, or convenient here; it agreeing only to some particular persons, and to some peculiar actions of them; insomuch that others presuming to act, according to that manner or kind, in Jesus's name, shall thereby become usurpers and deceivers. We (and to us all this precept is directed) shall heinously transgress our duty, doing any thing thus in his name, without his letters of credence; without being specially called or sent, or being duly by him authorized thereto. Jer. vii. 13. xxvi. 5. xiv. 14. Jam. v. 1. Joh. v. 43. Matt. x. 4. Ezr. v. 1. 2 Cor. v. 20. Rom. xiii. 4. Deut. i. 17.

These and such like senses the present matter doth not well admit: the rest that suit thereto I shall with some distinction in order represent.

I. To do in another's name sometime doth signify to do it out of affection or honour to another; for another's sake, because we love or esteem him; ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι being equivalent to ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματος, and διὰ τὸ ὄνομα. Thus it is said, *Whoso-* Compare Mark ix. 41. Matt. x. 41. xxiv. 9. xix. 29.

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ever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name; because ye are Christ's, (is added by way of interpretation, that is, out of respect to Christ, because of your relation to him,) *shall not lose his reward.* And thus surely we ought to do every thing in Jesus's name: all our actions ought to proceed from a principle of grateful love and reverence towards our gracious Redeemer. *Let all your actions be done in charity*, saith the Apostle; if in charity to our neighbour, then much more in love to him, for whose sake we are especially bound to love our neighbour. Upon any undertaking, or applying ourselves to action, we should so reflect thereupon, as to consider, whether that we are going about be apt to please him, and conducible to his honour; if so, remembering what he hath done and suffered for us, (what excellent blessings he hath purchased for us, what exceeding benefits he hath conferred upon us,) we should, out of love and respect to him, readily perform it; but if it otherwise appear displeasing or dishonourable to him, we should, from the same principles, carefully decline it. The duty is certain, and the reason thereof evident; for inducement to the practice thereof, observe St. Paul's example; who thus represents himself in the main employment of his life, acting, *The love of Christ constrains us; judging this, that he died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to him that died and rose for them:* the love of Christ, begot and maintained by a consideration of his great benefits conferred on him, was the spring that set St. Paul on work, that excited and urged him forward to action. Thus doing, we shall do in Jesus's name; but if we act out of love to ourselves, (to promote our own interests, to gratify our own desires, to procure credit or praise to ourselves,) we act only in our own names, and for our own sakes; not in the name, or for the sake of Jesus.

Matt. xviii. 5.
1 Cor. xvi. 14.
Φιλοτιμούμενον αὐτὸ τοῦτο κρῖναι.
2 Cor. v. 9, 14.
1 Thess. ii. 6.
Tit i. 11.
1 Pet v. 2.
Phil. i. 15.
Matt. xxiii. 5.

II. To do in another's name implies doing, chiefly, for the interest or advantage of another, upon another's behalf or account, as the servants or factors of another. For, when the business is another's, and the fruit or benefit emergent belong to another, he that prosecutes that

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business may well be, and is commonly, supposed to act in that other's name. Thus our Saviour is in St. John's Gospel expressed *to come, to speak, to act in God's name*; because he did God's business, (*the work which God gave him to accomplish*,) and entirely *sought the glory of God*, as he there himself often avouches and professes. And thus, in imitation of him, ought we also to do all things in his name; remembering that *we are not our own men, but the servants of Jesus*, (servants to him not only by nature, as to our Maker and preserver, but by purchase, as to our Redeemer, who bought us with the greatest price; and by compact also, we having freely undertaken his service, and expecting wages from him,) that we have therefore no business or employment properly our own, but that all our business is, (or should be) to serve him, and promote his glory; *Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of our Lord.* Whatever, I say, we do, we therefore should perform it with this formal reference, as it were, toward Jesus, as his servants, from conscience of the duty we owe to him; with intention therein to serve him; in expectation of reward only from him. So doth St. Paul (in prosecution of this same precept) beneath in this chapter enjoin us, that, *whatever we do, we perform it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing* (or considering) *that from the Lord we shall receive the recompence of the inheritance; for that we serve the Lord Christ.* In like manner otherwhere he teaches us to do what we do, *not as pleasers of men*, (not upon any inferior accounts,) *but as servants of Christ, knowing and considering that we have a Master in heaven.* But,

John vii. 18. viii. 54. x. 25. v. 43. 36. vi. 28. ix. 3, 4. 1 Cor. vi. 19. vii. 23. Heb. ix. 12. 1 Pet. i. 18. Rom. xiv. 8, 9. 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. iii. 23, 24. Eph. vi. 6, 9.

III. Doing in another's name imports frequently doing by the appointment and command, or by the commission and authority of another. Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει, καὶ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι; *By what power and in what name have ye done these things*, say the High Priests to the Apostles; that is, who did appoint or authorise you to do thus? Their answer was ready; *In the name of Jesus*, who had sent, commissionated, and commanded them to preach and propagate that doctrine. And thus we are also bound to do all

Acts iv. 7. John v. 36, 37, 43. xiv. 14. xvii. 18. Luke xxiv. 47.

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things in the name of Jesus, regulating all our actions by his law; conforming our whole lives to his will; acting, not only out of good principles, (principles of love and conscience,) but according to right rules, the rules of his word and example, which he hath declared and prescribed to us: for what is done beside his warrant and will cannot be rightly esteemed done in his name; will not as so be avowed or accepted by him; no unjust or impious action will he upon any terms countenance or patronize. It was once a famous saying, *All mischief begins in nomine Domini;* and much surely, more than one way, hath been done under the like notion or pretence: but this will not serve to excuse the doing of that, in the day of final reckoning for our actions. For *there will be many*, we are taught, *that shall in that day, by specious professions of having done this or that in Christ's name*, veil their transgressions and their neglects of duty, *saying, Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name prophesied, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful things?* who yet, our Lord himself assures us, shall have this reply made to them, *I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.* There will be those that shall claim acquaintance with Christ in such terms: *Lord, we have eaten and drank before thee; and thou hast taught in our streets;* whom yet our Lord will disclaim with a, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.* It is not, we see, prophesying in Christ's name, (or preaching about him,) nor frequent attendance upon those who do so, nor speaking much or hearing much concerning him: it is not having great gifts or endowments conferred by Christ, (not even so great as that of working miracles;) it is not familiar converse with Christ, or making frequent addresses to him, that can sanctify all a man's actions, or so entitle them to the name of Christ, as to secure his person from being disavowed and rejected by Christ; it is only the conforming all our actions to his holy laws, that can assure us to be acknowledged and accepted by him. This I could wish they would consider, who seem, by such pretences, to commend or excuse their actions, although otherwise irregular and plainly

2 Cor. v. 20. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Thess. iii. 6.

John xvi. 2.

Matt. vii. 22.

Luke xiii. 26.

contrary to the laws of Christ; such as those of being meek and charitable toward all men; living peaceably ourselves, and endeavouring to promote peace among others; abstaining from rash and hard censures, from reviling and defaming others; paying reverence and obedience to superiors; and the like laws of Christ, not only express and manifest, but even of the highest rank and consequence among them; being mainly conducing to that which our Lord especially tenders, the public welfare and benefit of mankind; the violation whereof cannot be justified by pretending any special regard whatever to Christ, or any collateral performances done, whether truly or seemingly, in his name. We do but deceive ourselves, if we conceit, that, because we think much, or speak much of Jesus, or have a zeal for something good, all our actions are done in his name: no, it only can be justly impressed upon, can warrant and sanctify actions truly good and agreeable to his law; it were an abuse and forgery to do it, like stamping the king's name or image on counterfeit metal; upon brass or tin, instead of gold or silver. Good intention and good principles are indeed, as it were, the form and soul of good actions; but their being just and lawful are the body and matter of them; necessarily also concurring to their essence and integrity; they cannot subsist without it, but must pass, as it were, for ghosts and shadows. We are therefore concerned in all our doings to have an especial regard to Christ's law as their rule; that will render them capable of Christ's name, and denominate them Christian. SERM. XXXIII.

IV. Hereto we may add, that what we do in imitation of Jesus, and in conformity to his practice, (that living rule and copy proposed to us,) we may be said peculiarly to do in his name. As a picture useth to bear his name, whom it was made to represent, and whom it resembles; so if we set Christ's example before us, and endeavour to transcribe it; if our life, in the principal lineaments of sanctity and goodness, do resemble his holy life, they may well bear his name. But if our practice be unlike and unsuitable to his, we cannot affix his name thereto with-

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out great presumption and abuse; such as would be committed, if to a draught of foul hue and ugly features, we should attribute the name of some most handsome and goodly person, of high worth and quality. To do thus in Jesus's name (with such a regard to him) is a duty often prescribed to us, not only as relating to some cases and actions, (as when his charity, his patience, his humility, his meekness, are signally commended to our imitation,) but generally, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought as he walked, so himself also to walk;* that is, whoever professes himself a Christian ought to conform the whole tenor of his conversation to that of Jesus; to endeavour in every imitable perfection to resemble him. So that whenever we undertake any action, we should do well to look upon this pattern; thus, as it were, examining and inquiring of ourselves, What did my master in this or the like case? Do I do the same thing, do I act from the same principles, do I proceed in the same manner as he did? Am I herein his disciple and follower? If so, in his name let me go on cheerfully; if not, let me forbear. Doing thus will not be only according to our duty, but an especial help and furtherance of good practice.

Eph. v. 1, 2. 1 Cor. x. 1. John xv. 12, 13. 14. Heb. xii. 2. John xiii. 15. Phil. ii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6.

V. To do in another's name doth sometimes import doing by any power derived or virtue imparted by another; for that a thing so done may be imputed, should be ascribed to that other. So, *Through thee*, saith the Psalmist, *will we push down our enemies; in thy name will we throw down those that hate us:* (through thee and in thy name signify the same thing.) So did the Apostles cast out devils, and perform their other miracles, in Jesus's name, (διὰ τῦ ὀνόματος, *by his name*, it is sometime expressed,) that is, by a divine virtue imparted from him. To this I add another acception, scarce different (at least as to our purpose) from that, according to which doing in another's name signifies doing it in trust, or confidence reposed upon another, with expectation of aid, or hope of good success from another. So, *We rest on thee*, said good king Asa, *and in thy name we go against this multitude;* in thy name, that is, hoping for assistance and

Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι. LXX. Psal. xliv. 5. lxxxix. 24. Matt. vii. 22. Mark ix. 38. Acts iii. 6. iv. 10, 30. John xvii. 11.

2 Chron. xiv. 11.

success from thee. And thus it is said, that *David went out* against *Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts:* that is, confiding in God's help, as his only weapon and defence: thus also did the holy Apostles work their miracles in Jesus's name, ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, *by faith in his name*, saith St Peter, *his name hath made this man strong;* that is, we did only trust in his divine power, and it was that power of his which restored that weak person to his strength. And thus also is it our duty to do all things in our Saviour's name; with faith and hope in him; wholly relying upon him for direction and assistance; expecting from him only a blessing and happy issue of our undertakings. What we do in confidence of our own wisdom or ability, or in affiance upon the help of any other person or thing, we do in our own name, or in the name of that thing (or that person) in whom we so confide; to ourselves, or to such auxiliaries, we shall be ready to attribute the success, and to render the glory of the performance; *glorying in our own arm*, and *sacrificing to our net.* But what we undertake only depending upon our Lord for ability and success, may therefore bear his name, because our faith derives the power from him, which enables us happily to perform it; so that the performance may truly be attributed to him, and to him we shall be apt to ascribe it. And thus, I say, we are certainly obliged to do every thing in his name, (in his name alone,) retaining a constant sense both of our own infirmity, and of the impotency of all other created things, and consequently a total diffidence both in ourselves and in them; but reposing all our trust in the direction and assistance of our all-wise and almighty Lord; of Jesus, to *whom all power in heaven and earth is given,* (who indeed had it originally by nature as God; but also farther hath acquired it by desert and purchase;) into whose hands all things are given; and all things are put under his feet; who hath obtained this power in design to use it for our good; and is thereby always ready to help us in our need, if we have recourse unto him, and rely upon him; making him what St. Paul styles him, *our hope;* our only

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1 Sam. xvii. 45.

Acts iii. 16.

Hab. i. 16.

Mat. xxviii. 18. Joh. iii. 35. xiii. 3. xvii. 2. Heb. i. 2. ii. 8. Eph. i. 22. 1 Cor. xv. 27. Phil. ii. 9. Apoc. v. 12. 1 Tim. i. 1.

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hope; renouncing all other confidences not subordinate to him. To do so is a duty evidently grounded as well upon the reason of the thing, as upon the will and command of God; to do otherwise is no less a palpable folly, than a manifest injury to God. For, in truth, neither have we nor any other created thing any power, other than such as he is pleased freely to dispense[h]; and which is not continually both for its being and its efficacy subject to him, so that he may at his pleasure subtract it, or obstruct its effect: *No king is saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety:* whence it is plain that we cannot upon any created power ground a solid assurance of success in any undertaking[i]; it will be *leaning upon a broken reed*, (which cannot support us, and will pierce our hands,) both a vain and a mischievous confidence; that will abuse us, bringing both disappointment and guilt upon us; the guilt of wronging our Lord many ways, by arrogating to ourselves, or assigning to others, what he only doth truly deserve, and what peculiarly of right belongs to him; withdrawing the same from him; implying him unable or unwilling to assist us, and do us good; neglecting to use that strength which he so dearly purchased and so graciously tenders; so disappointing him, and defeating, as it were, his purposes of favour and mercy towards us. On the other side, trusting only upon our Saviour, we act wisely and justly, gratefully and officiously; for that, in doing so, we build our hopes upon most sure grounds; upon a wisdom that cannot be deceived; upon a strength that cannot be withstood; upon a goodness that hath no limits; upon a fidelity that can never fail. For that we act with an humility and sobriety of mind suitable to our condition, and to the reason of things; for that we thereby declare our good opinion of him, as only able, and very

Isa. xxxvi 6.

[h] Eccl. ix. 11. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. By strength shall no man prevail. 1 Sam. ii. 9. Psalm xxxiii. 17. cxlvi. 3. xliv. 3.

[i] Isaiah xliii. 11. Beside me there is no Saviour. Hos. xiii. 4, 10. Psal. cvi. 21. Jer. xiv. 8.

willing to do us good; for that we render him his just honour and due; we comply with his earnest desires, we promote his gracious designs of mercy and kindness toward us. SERM. XXXIII.

Hence it is that every where in holy Scripture God so highly commends, so greatly encourages this duty of trusting alone in him; that he so ill resents, and so strongly deters from the breach or omission thereof: *Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit:* thus in that place, thus in innumerable others we are threatened not only with disappointment and bad success in our undertakings, but with severe punishment, if we betake ourselves to other succours, and neglect or distrust, or, in so doing, desert God; but are encouraged, not only with assurance of prosperous success, but of additional rewards, if entirely in our proceedings we depend upon and adhere to God. Thus we should do in all, even our most common and ordinary affairs, which no less than the rest are subject to his power, and governed by his care. For you know how St. James doth reprehend it as a piece of naughty boasting and arrogance, to say, *To-morrow we will go to this city, and stay there a year, and trade and gain:* instead of saying, *If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that;* that is, to resolve upon, undertake, or prosecute any affair, without submission to God's will, and dependence on his providence: but especially we ought, in matters and actions more spiritual, to practice this duty; for that to the performing of these we have of ourselves a peculiar impotence and unfitness; needing therefore a more especial assistance from our Lord; that

Psal. cxlvi. 5. xl. 4. xliv. 6. xxxiii. 18. cxlvii. 11. xxxiv. 22. cxxv. 1. xxxi. 19. lxi. 4. xci. 4. cxviii. 8. lxxviii. 22. lxvi. 2. cxii. 7. Isa. li. 5. lvii 13. 1. 7. xxvi. 3. Jer. xiv. 8. xvii. 5, 6, &c.

Matt. x. 29, 30. Jam. iv. 13.

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the success of them more particularly depends upon him; that the glory of them in an especial manner is appropriate, and, as it were, consecrate to him.

If it be a folly and a crime to think we can do any thing without God, it is much more so to think we can do any thing good without him; it is an arrogance, it is an idolatry, it is a sacrilege much more vain and wicked to do so[k]. To imagine that we can, by the force of our own reason and resolution, achieve any of those most high and hard enterprises, to which by the rules of virtue and piety we are engaged; that we can, by our own conduct and prowess, encounter and withstand, defeat and vanquish those so crafty, so mighty enemies of our salvation, (our own fleshly desires, the menaces and allurements of the world, the sleights and powers of darkness,) is much a worse presumption, than in other affairs of greatest difficulty to expect success without the divine assistance and blessing, than in other most dangerous battles to think we can, *by our own bow, and by our own spear, save ourselves;* that we can obtain victory otherwise than from his hand and disposal, who is the Lord of hosts. Reason tells us, and experience also shews, and our Saviour hath expressly said it, *That* (in these things) *without him* (without his especial influence and blessing) *we can do nothing;* he tells us, that we are but branches, inserted into him; so that, without continually drawing sap from him, we can have no life or vigour spiritual. The wisest and best of men have, by their practice, taught us to acknowledge so much; to depend wholly upon him, to ascribe all to him in this kind. *Why*, say St. Peter and St. John, *do ye wonder at this? or why gaze ye upon us, as if by our own power, or piety, we had made this man walk?—His name*, (the name of Jesus,) *through faith in his name, hath made this man strong:* that acknowledgment indeed concerns a miraculous work; but spiritual works are in reality no less, they requiring as much or more of virtue superna-

Psal. xliv. 6.

John xv. 5.

Acts iii. 12, 16.

[k] Οὔτε γὰρ ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἄνευ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα συναναφορᾶς εὖ πράξεις. *Ant.* iii. 13.

tural, or the present interposition of God's hand to effect them; they make less shew without, but need as great efficacy within: so our Saviour, it seems, did imply, when he said, *He that believes in me, the works that I do he shall do, and greater works than these.* Every good and faithful man doth not work miracles; yet somewhat greater, it seems, by the grace of Christ, *he performs:* however, to these St. Paul referred, when he affirmed, *I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me;* nothing was so hard that he feared to attempt, that he despaired to master and go through with by the help of Christ; and, *Not*, saith he again, *that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God:* he was as sensible of his own inability, as he was confident in the gracious help of Christ. Thus should we do all things in the name of Jesus; and it is not only a duty to do it, but it may be a great encouragement to us, that we are capable of doing it; a great comfort to consider, that in all honest undertakings we have so ready and so sure an aid to second and further us in them; confiding in which, nothing is so difficult, but we may easily accomplish; (*a grain of faith* will be able *to remove mountains;*) nothing is so hazardous, but we may safely venture on; (*walking on the sea, treading upon serpents and scorpions*, daring *all the power of the enemy.*) In his name we may, if our duty or good reason calls us forth, how small and weak soever, how destitute soever of defensive arms, or weapons offensive, naked and unarmed, with a sling and a stone, go out against the biggest and best armed Philistine, nothing doubting of victory: our weakness itself, if we be humbly conscious and sensible thereof, will be an advantage to us, as it was to St. Paul, to all effects and purposes, *the grace of our Lord will be sufficient for us*, if we apply it, and trust therein. But farther,

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John xiv. 12.

Phil. iv. 13.

2 Cor. iii. 5.

Οὐδὲν ἀδυνατήσει ὑμῖν. Matt. xvii. 20. xxi. 21. Luke xvii. 6. Matt. xiv. 29. Luke x. 19.

2 Cor. xii. 9.

VI. To do in another's name may denote, to do it with such regard to another, that we acknowledge (that, I say, we heartily and thankfully acknowledge) our hope of prospering in what we do; our expectation of acceptance, favour, or reward to be grounded on him; that they are

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procured by his merits and means, are bestowed only for his sake. Thus our Saviour bids us to *offer our prayers in his name*; that is, representing unto God his meritorious performances in our behalf, as the ground of our access to God, of our hope to obtain from him what we request. So also we are enjoined to *give thanks in his name*; that is, with persuasion and acknowledgment, that only in respect to him we become capable to receive or enjoy any good thing; that, in effect, all the blessings by divine mercy vouchsafed us have been procured by him for us, are through him conveyed unto us. And thus also we should do all things in the name of Jesus, offering all our deeds to God, as sacrifices and services unworthy of acceptance, both in themselves, and as proceeding from us; but pleasing and acceptable to God only for his sake. We should do well, upon all occasions, to remember our natural condition, and the general state of mankind; such as it was before he did undertake, such as it would have continued still, had he not undertaken for it; that our race had forfeited and was fallen from God's favour; having injured him beyond all power of making him any reparation or satisfaction; that thence it was secluded from all means and hopes apparent of happiness, was exposed and tended downright unto misery; that we consequently had no ground to hope that God (from whom, no less in mind and in deed, than by reason of our guilt and state of condemnation, we were estranged) would, in kindness, bestow any good upon us, or from us accept favourably any thing we should do. But that, by our Saviour's performances, the case is altered; he, by his entire obedience, having so pleased God, by his patient submission to God's will, having so appeased his anger and satisfied his justice, that God is not only reconciled, but hath an especial favour, bears an earnest good-will toward us. That now the good things we possess, we may truly esteem as blessings, and enjoy them with real comfort, as proceeding from mercy and kindness; now what we honestly endeavour, we may hope shall please God; now we have a free access to God, and may cheer-

John xiv. 13 xv. 16. xvi. 23, 24.

Eph. v. 20. iii. 21.

Rom. iii. 23. xi. 32. Gal. iii. 22.

Acts iii. 26. Eph. ii. 17. iii. 12. Ἐν πεποιθήσει. Eph. i. 6.

fully present our sacrifices of duty and devotion, with a full persuasion that they shall be accepted. But all this happiness, all these favours and privileges, we must always remember to come from the continued procurement and mediation of the Beloved; so as ever to be ready to acknowledge it, and to return our thanks therefore. To this sense that our Apostle here had an especial regard, the words immediately following imply—*Doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*; that is, in all things we do, taking occasion to render thanks to God, as for his sake being merciful and bountiful to us; bestowing upon us the good we enjoy, blessing our endeavours, accepting our performances. We must not conceit, that any regard, any mercy, any favour, any reward is due to us in equity, is in effect conferred upon us, upon our own personal score; (for, how mean things are we in comparison of his greatness; how vile and filthy things must we appear to his most pure and all-discerning eyes; how unworthy of his regard and of his affection must we needs take ourselves to be, if we do but well consider, and are acquainted with ourselves?) but that *in him*, (i. e. for his sake, and by his means) *God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings*, in him ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς, *God hath favoured*, and cast his grace upon *us*; valuing us notwithstanding all our imperfections; loving us, notwithstanding all the spots with which we are defiled; notwithstanding all the offences we have committed; for the relation and alliance we have to Jesus. Nor must we look on our services (the best we are able to perform) as in themselves grateful or satisfactory: for all of them, if we mark them well, we shall find not only quite *unprofitable to God*, but very defective in many respects; for, who can say, he performs any thing both in kind, in manner, in degree thoroughly right and good, with that ardency of love he owes to God, with that purity of intention, with that earnest vigour of spirit, with that undistractedness of mind, with which he should perform it? No; in all our flock we cannot pick out a sacrifice entire and unblemished; such as God requires, such as duty exacts of

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Eph. i. 3, 6.

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us. They need therefore (all our services need) to be commended and completed by the beloved Son's perfectly well-pleasing performances; they need to be cleansed and hallowed, by passing through the hands of our most holy and undefiled High Priest; to become sweet and savoury (or to receive that ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, which St Paul speaks of) from being offered up *in his censer*. In fine, as all our actions should, in our intention, be works of religion dedicated to God's service and honour; sacrifices, as it were, of gratitude and homage to God; so they ought all to be offered up in the name of Jesus. I add farther,

Heb. vii. 26.

Eph. v. 2. Rev. viii. 3, 5.

VII. Lastly, that to do in the name of Jesus may well imply doing with invocation of him: thus we may understand that place of St. James, where the elders are advised *to pray, and anoint the sick in the Lord's name*, for, to anoint them, imploring our Lord's blessing upon them, and upon those means used for their cure. And thus St. Chrysostom [1] expounds the words; do all in Jesus's name, *that is*, saith he, *imploring him for your helper in all things; always first praying to him, undertake your business* Doing thus, will indeed christen and consecrate our actions; for *all things*, saith our Apostle, *are sanctified by the word of God, and prayer*; that is, by God's blessing implored, and obtained by prayer; or, if God's word be there taken for his law, or revealed will, it is there signified, that our actions are not only sanctified by their lawfulness, or conformity to that good rule, God's declared will, but also by the invocation of his name; however, all our actions, it seems, are unhallowed and profane, if not accompanied with devotion [m]. That to do thus is our duty, appears by those frequent injunctions, to *pray indesinently*, to *pray always*, to *abide instantly in prayer*; which do not only

Jam. v. 14.

1 Tim. iv. 5.

1 Thess. v. 17. Luke xviii. 1. Rom. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2.

[1] In locum. Αὐτὸν καλῶν βοηθὸν, ἐπὶ πάντων πρότερον αὐτῷ εὐχόμενος, ἄπτου τῶν πραγμάτων.

[m] Δεῖ πασης τῆς πράξεως προηγεῖσθαι τὴν προσευχήν. *M. Erem.*

Μηδὲν μήτε ποιῶμεν μήτε λέγωμεν πρὶν τὸν θεὸν καλέσαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι συνεφάψασθαι τῶν ἐν χερσὶν ἡμῖν ἁπάντων. *Chrys.*

Τοῦτο δήγε πάντες ὅσοι καὶ κατὰ βραχὺ σωφροσύνης μετέχουσιν ἐπὶ πάσῃ ὁρμῇ καὶ σμικρῷ καὶ μεγάλῳ πράγματος θεὸν αἰεί τε καλοῦσιν. *Plato Tim. Vid. Epist.* 8. *Arr. Epict.* 11. 18.

import, that we should pray often, and continue with patience and earnestness in prayer: but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among, all our actions, undertaking nothing (at least of consideration or moment) without it. We should do it (our Saviour commands) ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, that is, *on every occasion:* and St. Paul gives the same direction; *Praying*, says he, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, *on all opportunities, with all prayer and supplication in spirit;* (in spirit, that is, I take it, *in our hearts* at least, and with secret elevations of our mind, if not with our mouth and voice.) And more explicitly otherwhere saith he, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing* (in all your affairs) *by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God* [n]. And thus to do (to accompany all our undertakings with prayer) we are indeed concerned upon many accounts. We need God's direction (being ourselves very blind and ignorant) in the choice of what we attempt; that our ends and designs may be good, conducible to God's honour and our own true advantage. For, as the Prophet tells us, *The way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his steps;* and, as the Wise Man adds, *Man's goings are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?* (implying, since God only knows what is best for us, that we of ourselves, without his direction, know not what to do, whither to go.) The holy Psalmist signifies the same in those words, (very encouraging to the practice of this duty,) *What man is he that feareth the Lord?* (that feareth him, that is, who worshippeth him, and seeketh his guidance,) *him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.* We need also (being ourselves not only weak and infirm, but inconstant and unstable) God's assistance and upholding hand in the pursuance of our well-chosen designs, (that we may use the best means, and proceed in a straight course; that we may persist upright and steady in

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Luke xi. 36.
Eph. vi. 18.
Eph. v. 19. Ἐν καρδίᾳ.
Phil. iv. 6, 7. Ἐν παντί.
Job xviii. 7. Isa. xxx. 1. Hos. x. 6. Prov. i. 25, 30. Psal. cvi. 13. xvi. 7. lxxiii. 24. cvii. 11. Jer. x. 23. Prov. xx. 24. xvi. 9.
Psal. xxv. 12, 9.

[n] Bene ac sapienter majores instituerunt, ut rerum agendarum, ita dicendi initium a precationibus caperetur; quod nihil rite, nihilque providenter homines siue Deorum immortalium ope, consilio, honore auspicarentur. *Plin. in Paneg.*

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our proceedings,) that which the wise Man seems to call, the establishing of our thoughts, and promises, as a consequence, upon our seeking God's assistance in our actions, and relying thereon; *Commit*, saith he, *thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established;* (thou shalt drive on thy good purposes steadily, without stumbling or falling; at least irrecoverably.) So the Psalmist assures us concerning a good man; *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; none of his steps shall slide: though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* We also farther, as to the final success of our affairs, stand in need of God's blessing; that he, upon whose will altogether depends the disposal of all events, should bestow a good issue unto our endeavours, that they prove not matter of discouragement or discomfort to us; that which also the Psalmist assures us of obtaining, upon condition of our imploring and depending upon God for it: *Commit thy way*, saith he, *unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.* We do thus need in all our affairs the direction, assistance, and blessing of our Lord; but shall not have them without prayer; for the rule is, *Ask and have, seek and find.* Without asking, we are not likely to obtain those gifts; without seeking, we must not hope to find those benefits from God. If we are so proud as to think we do not need them, or so negligent as not to mind them, or so distrustful of the divine power or goodness, that we imagine he cannot or will not afford them to us, we are like to be so unhappy as to want them. God expects from us, that we should, in whatever we do, acknowledge him: (it is the Wise Man's expression, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths:*) acknowledge him as the only faithful guide and counsellor; as the only sufficient helper and protector; as the only free arbitrator and donor of good success. Nothing therefore is well done, which is not thus done: we cannot be satisfied in what we do; we cannot hope for a comfortable end thereof; we cannot expect a blessing from God, if we have refused, or if we have neglected the recommending our proceed-

Prov. xvi. 3.

Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24, 31

Psa. xxxvii. 5. cxix. 5, 133.

Luke xi. 9, 10. John xiv. 13. Psal. ix. 10.

Prov. iii. 6.

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ings to his care. We can, I say, do nothing; not eat, not sleep, not trade, not travel, not study with any true content, any reasonable security, any satisfactory hope, if we have not first humbly implored God's favour; committing ourselves and our business into his hand, that hand which dispenseth all good, which alone can keep off all danger and mischief from us. *God shall send his angel before thee:* so did our father Abraham send his servant about his business; having questionless before commended it to God by prayer. *God Almighty give you mercy before the man:* so did Jacob give his sons their dispatches toward Egypt. In such a manner did we enter upon all our affairs, we could not but be full of hope, and void of care concerning them; for that commonly we are so full of anxiety about the event of what we undertake, whence doth it arise, but from our neglect of this duty? for, having committed our business into so sure a hand, how could we farther be solicitous about it? Had we, according to St. Peter's advice, *cast our care upon the Lord;* or, *cast our burden upon him,* (as the Psalmist exhorts us;) had we duly sought and invoked him, who *never faileth them that seek him,* who *is nigh to all them that call upon him;* we should not have such a load of troublesome care resting upon us; our hearts would be light and free as to all these things; we should be secure, that nothing very bad or disastrous could befal us; we should experience it true, what the Prophet affirms in that prayer or psalm to God; *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. Be careful for nothing,* St. Paul bids us; *but in every thing let your request be made known to God:* if we perform the latter part, the former will naturally be consequent thereon. Thus, in the last place, should we do all things in the name of Jesus, (upon all occasions praying to him, or, which is all one, to God in his name,) which that we may do, (that we are allowed and encouraged to do it,) is also a privilege, and an advantage unvaluable.

Gen. xxiv. 7.

Gen. xliii. 14.

1 Pet. v. 7. Psal. lv. 22.

Psal. ix. 10. Old Trans. lxx. 4.

Psal. cxlv. 18. cxii. 7, 8.

Isa. xxvi. 3. Phil. iv. 6.

In so many ways and particular respects may we, and ought we to perform all we do in the name of Jesus:

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we should do every thing out of grateful affection and respect to him, as our chief principle; every thing as his servants, aiming especially at the pleasing of him and promoting his honour, as our principal end; every thing according to his will and commandment, as our constant rule; every thing after his example, as our best pattern; every thing in confidence of his gracious assistance and blessing, as our only strength and support; every thing with hope of acceptance purely upon his account; every thing with thankful sense and acknowledgment to God for the mercies and favours conveyed unto us by his means, conferred upon us for his sake; every thing with humble invocation of him, or with prayer to God in his name: in sum, every thing with a due and proper regard had to him; so that he be not passed over or left out in any thing we undertake; but come always into consideration, according as our relations to him and our obligations to him do require. In the performances of which duties the life indeed of our religion (of all our good practice, of all our devotion) doth consist.

To all this I shall only subjoin the mention of one general duty, implied in all and each of those we have propounded, which is this:

VIII. That our Lord Jesus should be frequently (and in a manner continually, always as to the habitual disposition of our souls, actually upon all fit occasions,) present to our minds and thoughts. This, I say, is plainly implied in the former duties. For, how is it possible we should perform all our actions (yea, utter all our words) with any sort of regard to him, if we seldom think of him? Such is the nimbleness and activity of our minds, that it is feasible enough to do thus; and, in respect to other objects, we commonly experience it done; for *animus est ubi amat*, whatever we affect, our mind, however otherwise employed, will be thinking on it; it is hard to restrain our thoughts from it: (the covetous man's heart will be among his bags; the voluptuous man's mind will be in his dishes; the studious person will be musing on his notions, do he what he can:) why then may we not as

well, as often direct our minds toward our Lord, and mix the remembrance of him with all other employments or entertainments of our thoughts? To do so is surely very requisite, and very expedient toward our good practice. Things far distant, or long absent, can have small efficacy, or influence: it is so, we see, in natural, and it is no less so in moral casualties; wherein representation to the fancy and memory have a force answerable to that, which real conjunction and approximation have in nature. As the heat and light of the sun, the farther he goes, and the longer he stays from us, do the more, proportionably, decrease; so, according to our less frequently and less seriously thinking upon any object, our affection and our respect thereto decay. If therefore we desire, according to our duty, to maintain in our hearts such dispositions (due affection and due reverence) toward Jesus; if we intend to suit our actions accordingly with due regard to him; we should, in order to those purposes, apply this so necessary and useful mean, of frequently bending our minds toward him; the doing of which, in likelihood, will conduce much to the sanctifying our affections, and to the governing our actions in a constant performance of our duty. For we can hardly sure (admitting we do seriously believe him to be such as we profess to believe him) with any competent attention think of him, but that thought will be apt to restrain us from doing ill, to incite us to do well; since together with that thought, some of his excellent perfections, some of our principal relations, and some of our great obligations to him, (each of which hath much virtue and force to those purposes,) will interpose and represent themselves. Frequently thinking of him, we shall sometimes apprehend him with incessant toil labouring in the service of God, and in promoting the welfare of men; sometimes we shall imagine him undergoing all kind of contumelies and bitter pains, suffering by the cruel hands and tongues of spiteful men; we shall, as it were, behold him bleeding under the scourge, and hanging upon the cross for our sakes. Sometimes he will appear to our minds crowned

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Acts x. 38.

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with majesty, reigning in sovereign power and glory, having all things in subjection under his feet; sometimes also he will be represented as our judge, before whose tribunal we must all shortly stand, and be obliged to render an account of all our doings: which thoughts passing through our minds, will be apt to make some impression upon our hearts, to have some influence upon our actions. For, can that most amiable and most venerable *idea* of a person so entirely pure and holy, so meek and humble, so full of benignity and charity toward all men, (particularly toward ourselves,) be otherwise than apt to beget some especial love and reverence toward him; than incline us strongly to do well, yea, than teach us what and how we should do so, in conformity to such a pattern set before us? it occurring to our thoughts, that he is our Lord and Master, (who made us, and maintains us; who purchased us to himself, and redeemed us from miserable slavery by his own heart-blood;) how can it fail to raise in us some awe, some sense of duty toward him? Will not the apprehension of what he did and what he suffered for us powerfully mind us, that, according to all justice and equity, in all ingenuity and gratitude, we are bound to do only that which will please him? If we think of Jesus, when we are setting upon any action, shall we not thereupon be apt thus to interrogate ourselves? Shall I do otherwise than he did, or would have done, so rendering myself unlike or contrary to him? Shall I be so unfaithful to my glorious Master, as to disserve him, or to neglect his service? Shall I be so unworthy toward my gracious Redeemer, my best friend, my most bountiful benefactor, as to disoblige him, to wrong him, to dishonour him, to grieve him by thus doing? Shall I be so vain and rash as to cross him who is my King, able to control and subdue me; as to offend him who is my Judge, resolved to condemn and punish me? Shall I wilfully forfeit that friendship and favour of his, upon which all my happiness doth depend? Shall I procure his displeasure and enmity, from which my utter ruin must inevitably follow? Such considerations have a natural connection with our frequent thinking

upon, and the presence, as it were, of our blessed Saviour to our minds; which therefore may be commended to us as an excellent instrument of bettering our hearts and our lives. SERM. XXXIII.

To conclude: Let us all always remember, and consider, that we are Christians related unto Christ Jesus, and called by his name, and as so, in his name let us do all things.

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XXXIV.

OF BEING IMITATORS OF CHRIST.

1 Cor. iv. 16.

I beseech you, be followers of me: or, I exhort you, be imitators of me [a].

SERM. XXXIV. St. Paul, by an impartial reflection upon his heart and life, being well assured, that he by the divine Spirit was enlightened with a certain knowledge of all necessary truth, and endued with plentiful measures of divine grace; being conscious of a sincere zeal in himself to honour God, and benefit men; being satisfied, that with integrity he did suit his conversation to the dictates of a good conscience, to the sure rule of God's law, and to the perfect example of his Lord; that his intentions were pure and right, his actions warrantable, and the tenor of his life conspicuously blameless, doth upon all occasions (not out of any self-conceitedness, arrogance, or ostentation, from which he, by frequent acknowledgment of his own defects and his miscarriages, and by ascribing all the good he had, or did, to the grace and mercy of God, doth sufficiently clear himself; but from an earnest desire to glorify God, and edify his disciples), describe, and set forth his own practice, proposing it as a rule, pressing it upon them as an argument, an encouragement, an obligation to the performance of several duties. So by it he directeth and urgeth the Ephesians to a charitable compliance, or com-

[a] Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.

plaisance, a sweet and inoffensive demeanour toward others: *Give no offence*, saith he, *neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved: be ye followers of me:* so he guides and provokes the Philippians to endeavours of proficiency in grace, and the study of Christian perfection: *Nevertheless,* saith he to them, *whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing: brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark such as walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.* By the like instance and argument, he moveth the Thessalonians to a sober and orderly conversation, to industry in their calling, to self-denial, and a generous disregard of private interest: *For yourselves*, saith he, *know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail day and night, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example to you to follow us.* The same persons he commendeth, as having by this means been induced to a patient constancy in faith and good works: *Ye know,* saith he, *what manner of men we were among you for your sake, and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction.* The practice of all virtue and goodness he also thus recommendeth under this rule and obligation: *Those things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.* Thus in our text (referring it to the context) he urgeth the Christians, his disciples at Corinth, to fidelity and diligence in the charges and affairs committed to them, to humility, patience, and charity; wherein he declareth himself to have set before them an evident and exact pattern. Which practice of St. Paul doth chiefly teach us two things; that we be careful to give, and that we be ready to follow good example: the latter of which duties more directly and immediately agreeth to the intent of this place; and it therefore I shall only now insist upon:

1 Cor. x. 32, 33. iv. 16.

Phil. iii. 16, 17.

2 Thess. iii. 7, 8, 9.

1 Thess. i. 5, 6.

Phil. iv. 9.

SERM. XXXIV. the subject and scope of my discourse shall be to shew, that it is our duty and concernment to regard the practices of good men, and to follow their example. To which purpose we may observe,

I. That it is the manner of the Apostles, upon all occasions, to inculcate this duty: we heard St. Paul: hear St.
Jam. v. 10. James: *Take*, saith he, *my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering*
Jam. v. 11. *affliction: Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and*
Heb. vi. 11, 12. *of tender mercy:* and the Apostle to the Hebrews: *We desire*, saith he, *that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and*
Heb. xii. 1. *patience inherit the promises:* and again, *Wherefore, seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that*
1 Pet. iii. 1, 6. *is set before us.* And St. Peter: *Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.* And wherever the eminent deeds of holy men are mentioned, it is done with an intimation at least, or tacit supposition, that we are obliged to follow their example.

II. We may consider that to this end (that we might have worthy patterns to imitate) the goodness of God hath raised up in all ages such excellent persons, furnishing them with rare endowments, and with continual influences of his grace assisting them, to this purpose, that they might not only instruct us with wholesome doctrine, but lead us also by good example in the paths of righteousness. For certainly what St. Paul saith concerning the sins and punishments of bad men, is no less applicable to
1 Cor. x. 11. the virtuous deeds and happy examples of good men: *All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

III. *They are written for our admonition:* it was a special design of God's providence in recording and recom-

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mending to our regard the divine histories. They were not framed as monuments of a fruitless memory and fame to them; they were not proposed to us as entertainments of our curiosity, as objects of wonder, as matters of idle discourse; that unconcernedly we should gaze upon them, or talk about them, as children look on fine gays: but they are set before us, as copies to transcribe, as lights to guide us in our way to happiness [b]. So that if we will not ingratefully frustrate the intentions of divine Providence for our good, we must dispose ourselves to imitate those illustrious patterns of virtue and piety.

IV. We may farther consider, that, in the nature of the thing itself, good example is of singular advantage to us, as being apt to have a mighty virtue, efficacy, and influence upon our practice: which consideration should much engage us to regard it, applying it as an instrument of making ourselves good, and consequently of becoming happy. Good example is, as I say, of exceeding advantage to practice upon many accounts.

1. Examples do more compendiously, easily, and pleasantly inform our minds, and direct our practice, than precepts, or any other way or instrument of discipline. Precepts are delivered in an universal and abstracted manner, naked, and void of all circumstantial attire, without any intervention, assistance, or suffrage of sense; and, consequently, can have no vehement operation upon the fancy, and soon do fly the memory; like flashes of lightning, too subtle to make any great impression, or to leave any remarkable footsteps, upon what they encounter; they must be expressed in nice terms, and digested in exact method; they are various, and in many disjointed pieces conspire to make up an entire body of direction: they do also admit of divers cases, and require many exceptions, or restrictions, which to apprehend distinctly, and retain long in memory, needs a

[b] Μεγίστη δὲ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ καθήκοντος εὕρεσιν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῶν θεοπνεύστων γραφῶν· ἐν ταύταις γὰρ αἱ τῶν πράξεων ὑποθ[illegible] εὑρίσκονται, αἱ τῶν βίων οἱ μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν ἀναγραπτοι παραδεδομένοι οἷον εἰκόνες τινες ἔμψυχοι τοῖς κατὰ θεὸν πολιτείας, τῷ μιμήματι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων πρόκεινται. *Bas. ad Greg. Ep.* 2.

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tedious labour, and continual attention of mind, together with a piercing and steady judgment. But good example, with less trouble, more speed, and greater efficacy, causes us to comprehend the business, representing it like a picture exposed to sense, having the parts orderly disposed and completely united, suitably clothed and dressed up in its circumstances; contained in a narrow compass, and perceptible by one glance, so easily insinuating itself into the fancy, and durably resting therein: in it you see at once described the thing done, the quality of the actor, the manner of doing, the minute seasons, measures, and adjuncts of the action; with all which you might not perhaps by numerous rules be acquainted; and this in the most facile, familiar, and delightful way of instruction, which is by experience, history, and observation of sensible events. A system of precepts, though exquisitely compacted, is, in comparison, but a *skeleton*, a dry, meagre, lifeless bulk, exhibiting nothing of person, place, time, manner, degree, wherein chiefly the flesh and blood, the colours and graces, the life and soul of things do consist; whereby they please, affect, and move us: but example imparts thereto a goodly corpulency, a life, a motion; renders it conspicuous, specious, and active, transforming its notional universality into the reality of singular subsistence. This discourse is verified by various experience; for we find all masters of art and science explicating, illustrating, and confirming their general rules and precepts by particular examples. Mathematicians demonstrate their *theorems* by *schemes* and *diagrams*, which, in effect, are but sensible instances; orators back their *enthymemes* (or rational argumentations) with *inductions*, (or singular examples;) philosophers allege the practice of Socrates, Zeno, and the like persons of famous wisdom and virtue, to authorize their doctrine: politics and civil prudence is more easily and sweetly drawn out of good history, than out of books *de Republica*. Artificers describe *models*, and set patterns before their disciples, with greater success, than if they should deliver accurate rules and precepts to them. For who would not more readily learn to build, by view-

ing carefully the parts and frame of a well-contrived structure, than by a studious inquiry into the rules of architecture; or to draw by setting a good picture before him, than by merely speculating upon the laws of perspective; or to write fairly and expeditely, by imitating one good copy, than by hearkening to a thousand oral prescriptions; the understanding of which, and faculty of applying them to practice, may prove more difficult and tedious, than the whole practice itself as directed by a copy? Neither is the case much different in moral concernments; one good example may represent more fully and clearly to us the nature of a virtue, than any verbose description thereof can do: in sooner time, and with greater ease, we may learn our duty by regarding the deportment of some excellent person, than by attending to many philosophical discourses concerning it[c]: for instance, if we desire to know what faith is, and how we should rely upon the divine Providence, let us propose to our consideration the practice of Abraham; wherein we may see the father of the faithful leaving a most pleasant country, the place of his nativity, and questionless most dear unto him under that notion; deserting his home and fixed habitation, his estate and patrimony, his kindred and acquaintance, to wander he knew not where in unknown lands, with all his family, leading an uncertain and ambulatory life in tents, sojourning and shifting among strange people, devoid of piety and civility, (among Canaanites and Egyptians,) upon a bare confidence in the Divine protection and guidance: we may see him, aged ninety-nine years, sensible of his own natural impotence, and an equal incapacity in his consort as to such purposes, yet with a

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[c] *Xen.* Ἀπομν. 4. It was Xenophon's observation, grounded upon his own experience, that the memory of Socrates's conversation did greatly profit his acquaintance. Τὸ μεμνῆσθαι μὴ παρόντος οὐ μικρὰ ὠφελεῖ τοὺς ἰωθότας αὐτῷ συνεῖναι. And Seneca saith, that the crowd of philosophers, which followed the same wise man, derived more of their ethics from his manners than his words: *plus ex moribus, quam ex verbis Socratis traxit. Sen. Ep.* 11. And he that shall reflect upon the story concerning his behaviour, when he was by malicious envy persecuted to death, may perhaps be more edified thereby, than by all his subtle discourses about death, and the soul's state after it.

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steady belief assuring himself, that from those dead stocks a numerous progeny should spring, and that he, who by all power of nature was unable to beget one child, should, by virtue of God's omnipotent word, become the father of a mighty nation: we may see him upon the first summons of the Divine command, without scruple or hesitancy, readily and cheerfully yielding up his only son (the sole ground of his hope and prop of his family, to whose very person the promise of multiplication was affixed) to be sacrificed and slain; not objecting to his own reason the palpable inconsistency of counsels so repugnant, nor anxiously labouring to reconcile the seeming contrariety between the Divine promises and commands; but resolved as it were (with an implicit faith in God) to believe things incredible, and to rely upon events impossible: contemplating these things, let us say what discourse could so livelily describe the nature of true faith, as this illustrious precedent doth.

Again, he that would learn how to demean himself in resisting the assaults of temptation, let him consider that one carriage of Joseph; of him, together withstanding the courtships of an attractive beauty, and rejecting the solicitations of an imperious mistress, advantaged by opportunities of privacy and solitude; when the refusal was attended with extreme danger, and all the mischiefs which the disdain of a furious lust disappointed, of an outrageous jealousy provoked, of a loving master's confidence abused, could produce; and all this by one of meanest condition, in a strange place, where no intercession, favour, or patronage of friends could be had, no equal examination of his cause might be expected; of him doing this, merely upon principles of conscience, and out of fear of God; (saying, *How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?*) and he that considers this example, how can he be ignorant of his duty in the like case?

Again, would we learn wisdom, constancy, and resolution in the conduct of honest and worthy designs, let us set before our eyes the pattern of Moses, and therein take notice, how he, obeying Divine instinct and direction,

having embraced that noble purpose of rescuing his countrymen from the Egyptian bondage, of settling them in a method of happy policy, and of bringing them into the promised land of their enjoyment, did behave himself in the execution thereof; with how indefatigable industry he solicited their cause with a fickle and deceitful, stupid and hard-hearted king; enduring frequent disappointments and repulses, together with furious storms of anger, and most terrible menaces from him: how having there surmounted all obstacles, and effectually enlarged the people from their restraint in Egypt, he led them on foot through a valley, encompassed with mountains of sea; and after that undertook a tedious march (a march of forty years) through a wild, barren, and dry solitude, (where no water was, but such as issued from the stony bowels of a rock; no food, or means of subsistence, but such as was supplied by the miraculous purveyance of Heaven,) in the meanwhile resisting the continual invasions of open enemies, in great numbers with armed violence striving to obstruct his passage, and defeat his purpose; having also, (which was more) his patience constantly exercised in supporting the froward perverseness of a most incredulous and intractable people, which took all occasions of complaint and mutiny against him; in contesting with the factious rivality of envious nobles, who repined at his successes, and maligned his authority among them; in bearing the indiscreet and untoward prevarications of his own most intimate friends and nearest relations, complying with the wicked humours and desires of the people; in sustaining many other perplexities and crosses; all which notwithstanding, he with insuperable resolution happily achieved his glorious undertaking; and will not this example, attentively regarded, beyond the power of any other means or method, explain to us the way of industry, courage, and perseverance in good and worthy, though high and difficult enterprises? SERM. XXXIV.

One instance more, and that of all most pertinent to our occasion; Would you be instructed, how faithfully to discharge the ministerial, or any other office? With a stead-

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fast attention then behold the excellent pattern of St. Paul: consider how in all his designs he zealously and singly aimed at the honour and service of God, neglecting his own safety, quiet, credit, and all worldly accommodations for the advancement of them: how affectionately he tendered the good and welfare of those, the care of whose spiritual condition was commended to him, using all his skill, care, and strength in promoting their edification; declaring himself for their good to be content, not only for a time to be absent from the Lord, being deprived of that happiness which he otherwise impatiently groaned for, and was fully assured of; but desirous, as it seems, to be secluded for ever from his blissful presence, by a dreadful *anathema*, for their sake: how prudently, meekly, and humbly he demeaned himself toward them; becoming all things to all men, forming himself into all allowable shapes and colours; undergoing all sorts of censure and imputations, (of a despicable, an ignorant, a foolish person;) tempering his speech and deportment to their capacities and needs, bearing their miscarriages, and complying with their weaknesses; parting freely with his own just liberty, pleasure, and satisfaction, for their spiritual advantage: how generously he despised his own profit and ease, refusing that supply he might with all reason and equity have required from them; choosing to maintain himself with the labour of his own hands, and the sweat of his brows, that he might render the Gospel nowise burdensome or offensive to them: how vigilantly and courageously he withstood the mischievous endeavours of false brethren, and treacherous seducers; earnestly contending for the Church's peace and quiet against factious spirits, and for the substantial truths of the Gospel against the pernicious devices of heretics and false teachers: how patiently he sustained all manner of pains, griefs, travels, wants, losses, hazards, distresses, disappointments, affronts, and reproaches, for the honour of God, the benefit of his spiritual children, the discharge of his duty, and satisfaction of his conscience: these things, I say, regard, and then tell me, if he might not reasonably inculcate this

admonition, *Imitate me;* and if his example be not of rare use to instruct us, how faithfully we should in our respective charges and employments demean ourselves. I might in like manner instance how excellent a rule of devotion the practice of the royal Prophet may be unto us; how Elias's practice might teach us to be zealous champions for truth and righteousness; how they who would be good judges, or honest patriots, may receive direction from the carriage of Samuel, Daniel, and Nehemiah [d]. But I proceed to say that farther, SERM. XXXIV.

II. Good examples do not only inform, but they persuade and incline our reason to good practice, commending it to us by plausible authority; a way of reasoning the most plain, easy, and suitable to all men's capacities; less subject to error and doubt than any other in particular cases; whereby as it is always more easy to know what is good and fit, so commonly it is most safe; there being few, who can so well discern what is good, as they may rest in the judgments of others. For that wise and virtuous persons do any thing, is a very probable argument, that we are obliged and concerned to do the like; seeing such persons may in all their actions be supposed to have an unbiassed regard to the rules of truth and justice. He therefore who can say, that Abraham, or David, or St. Paul, did so in such a case, supposeth that he hath no small reason to do the like; it is accounted pardonable, yea, almost commendable, to err with such persons; because it is done with good appearance of reason, seeing such persons were themselves unlikely to err: *Will you,* saith Cicero [e], *commemorate to me Scipio's, and Cato's, and Lælius's, and say they did the same thing; though the thing displeases me, yet I cannot withstand the authority of such men: their authority is so great, that it can cover even*

[d] Ὑπομονῆς οὖν διδάσκαλος ἄριστος ὁ τῆ μακαρίᾳ Ἰὼβ βίος, ἀνεξικακίας ὁ τῆ Μωσέως, πραότητος ὁ τῆ Δαεὶδ, &c. *Chrys.* tom. v. p. 656.

[e] Africanos mihi, et Catones, et Lælios commemorabis, et eos fecisse idem dices, quamvis res mihi non placeat, tamen contra hominum auctoritatem probare non potuero. Magna est hominum auctoritas, et etiam tanta, ut delicti suspicionem tegere possit. *Cic. in Verr.* iii.

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the suspicion of a fault. It is obvious in temporal concernments, how great a stroke this way of discourse hath; how boldly men adventure their dearest interests in following such, whom they probably deem honest, and able to guide them: for instance, in travelling, if one being ignorant or doubtful of his way happen to meet a person, whom he conceives able, and nowise concerned or disposed to mislead him, he without scruple follows him, and confidently relies on his direction. In like manner, all good men in the way of virtuous practice tending directly toward happiness, (our common journey's end;) it being their design, their interest, and their endeavour not to mistake the way, not to deflect from the right and nearest course thereto, men are apt to think it reasonable and safe to accompany in their progress, or to press after them in their steps: and surely, next to a clear and certain rule, there is not any more rational warrant for practice, and consequently no better inducement thereto, than such good precedents. Farther,

III. Examples do incite our passions, and impel them to the performance of duty. They raise hope, they inflame courage, they provoke emulation, they urge upon modesty, they awaken curiosity, they affect fancy, they set in motion all the springs of activity. It may not be amiss to shew how, particularly,

1. They raise hope, by discovering to us and assuredly proving the feasibleness of matters propounded, or the possibility of success in undertaking good designs, and that by the best and most convincing of arguments, experience. Nothing so depresseth hope and advanceth despondency, as an apprehension of impossibility, or, which is equivalent thereto, an extreme difficulty (appearing to surmount our present forces) in the business to be attempted: of such a conceit desperation seemeth a reasonable consequence. For, τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἐφίεσθαι μανικὸν, *it is a madness to aim at impossibilities;* and such, considering the great infirmity of human nature, its strong propensions to evil, and averseness from good, together with the manifold impediments and allurements objecting them-

Chrys. tom. i. p. 69.

selves in the way of good practice, all duties are barely represented in precepts, and pressed by rational inducements might seem to be, if good example did not clearly demonstrate them to be possible, yea sometimes facile; even those, which upon a superficial view do seem most difficult, and insuperable by our weak endeavour. The Stoical doctrine, which described a fine and stately portraiture of virtue, and inculcated very strict rules, (a close following of God and nature, a perfect victory over self, the subduing all passions, and overruling all corporeal appetites; an entire freedom, composure, and tranquillity of mind; a total indifferency in respect of fortune and all external events, with the like duties, rarely practised, although upon all accounts, acknowledged conformable to reason,) was therefore by most rejected as useless, or exploded as ridiculous, as being presumed to propound matters purely imaginary and unpracticable: yet he that hath seen this docrine in great measure exemplified by Zeno, the first master of it, would have had no such reason to contemn it, nor to despair of practising according to it, if he would seriously endeavour it: exemplified, I say, by Zeno, whereof we have an illustrious testimony from a solemn decree of the Athenians: ἐπειδὴ Ζήνων Μνασέου, &c. Laert. in Zen. *Whereas Zeno, the son of Mnaseas the Cittican, having many years professed philosophy in this city, and as well in all other things hath demeaned himself like a good man, as particularly exhorting the young men, who went to be instructed by him, hath provoked them to virtue and sobriety; withal exhibiting his own life a pattern of the best things answerable to the discourses he used to make; it is therefore auspiciously decreed by the people, that Zeno the son of Mnaseas be solemnly praised and crowned (according to the usage) with a golden crown; and that a monument be erected for him at the public charge in the Ceramicum*, (the place where those were interred, who had bravely exposed their lives for public defence.) This was indeed a noble attestation and a comely respect exhibited to a virtuous conversation; making in some measure a satisfaction

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for the heinous affront done thereto, when, instead of honouring it with a crown, they rewarded it with a cup of poison, given to the excellent Socrates. Suitably to which testimony Seneca saith of Cleanthes, that his virtuous practice depended more upon the observation of Zeno's life, than the information of his doctrine. *Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si eum tantummodo audisset: vitæ ejus interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illum an ex formula sua viveret. Cleanthes*, saith he, *had not so nearly resembled Zeno, if he had only attended to his discourses: he was present to his life, he took notice of his private carriage, he observed whether his practice did suit to his doctrine.* So that Stoicism itself, which speaketh such prodigies, was, it seems, founded not only upon big words, the issues of a speculative fancy, but more upon the good practiee of its first master and institutor. And indeed he that would effectually persuade the undertaking of any enterprize, must either suppose it, or prove it effectible; and the most easy, the most evident way of proving it is by example. *Men*, saith Pliny junior well, *are better instructed by examples, which have in them chiefly this advantage, that they do prove the things may be done which they enjoin.* And, *Human infirmity*, saith Salvian to the same purpose, *requires the assistance of example, that it may more easily now perform that which it knows others to have before done; all posterity being admonished by hearing that what hath once been done, may be done again.* And, *The example*, saith St. Bernard, *of a work done is a lively and efficacious oration, easily persuading what we intend, by proving that feasible which we strive to persuade unto*[f]. Upon which score we therefore are exceedingly

[f] Melius homines exemplis docentur, quæ imprimis hoc boni habent, quæ approbant, quæ præcipiunt fieri posse. *Plin. Jun. Paneg.*

Adjuvari se exemplis exoptat humana infirmitas, quo facilius ipsa nunc faciat, quæ alios fecisse ante cognoscat; dum admonetur auditu ætas omnis fieri posse, quod factum est. *Salv. ad Eccl. Cath.*

Sermo quidam vivus et efficax exemplum operis est, facile persuadens quod intendimus, dum factibile probat esse quod suademus. *Bern. de Resur. Serm.* iii.

obliged to those holy men, who by their practice have assured us, that the highest duties exacted of us by our religion (the mortification of unreasonable desires, the suppression of irregular passions, the loving and blessing our enemies, the renouncing worldly vanities and pleasures, the rejoicing in afflictions, the voluntary abdication of our estates in some cases, yea, exposing life itself to inevitable hazard and loss,) are not chimerical propositions of impossible performances; but duties (if we shall seriously and vigorously apply our endeavours to them, and suffer our hopes to be elevated by their example) really practicable. Piety abstractedly viewed in precept may seem an airy project, a name, a notion; but it being seen in example will prove a matter substantial, true, and feasible. A direct and pure speculation thereof may dazzle our sight, and dash our hopes; but as being reflected from persons practising it, we may bear its lustre, and hope to attain it. SERM. XXXIV.

2. Examples do inflame courage. So the Apostle to the Hebrews signifieth, when to this purpose he intimateth, that he mentioned and setteth before them the examples of the Patriarchs; that he thereby might excite their courage, and cause them resolutely to undertake that obedience, and patiently to undergo those afflictions, which they performed and sustained; *that*, saith he, *ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* For that heat, and active spirit, which in some degree resideth in all men's breasts, is by example kindled, as one flame is kindled by the contact or approach of another. How many persons, timorous and averse from dangerous undertakings, have notwithstanding become very bold and adventurous in war, by the discipline and influence of an exemplary valour! It is Plutarch's observation concerning Cæsar's soldiers, that they who in service under other commanders did not exceed the ordinary rate of courage, nor excel Heb. vi. 12.

Ex aliorum factis fieri posse credunt, quod forte cum putant fieri non posse pigrescunt. *Cyp. Ep.* l. ii. 2.

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their fellows, did yet when he led them become irresistibly valiant, being animated and inspired by his unparalleled gallantry [g]: and who is there indeed so incurably heartless, so desperately sluggish or stupid, whom the sight of a valiant leader marching before into the mouth of danger, will not infuse fire and vigour into, and instigate forward into a participation of brave adventure? So example doth by a kind of contagion insinuate courage, or inveigle men thereinto; beside that it is a kind of daring, and proclaimeth him a dastard, that will not imitate it; which imputation the lowest courage of man can hardly digest, and will therefore, by doing somewhat answerable, strive to decline it.

3. Again: Examples provoke emulation [h]; which is another strong principle of activity; moving us earnestly to desire, and thence eagerly to pursue, whatever good, privilege, or advantage, we see another to enjoy. To observe another of the same nature and capacities with ourselves to have shone with an illustrious virtue, to be consecrated to posterity by a lasting fame, and to be crowned with glorious rewards above; what other reflections of thought can it produce in us, than such as these? Shall he, a man like myself, endued with the same faculties, appetites, and passions; subject to the same infirmities, temptations, needs, cares, and encumbrances of life; shall he, by noble dispositions of soul, and worthy performances, render himself highly considerable; while I, by sordid qualities and unworthy practices, debase and render myself despicable? Shall he leave behind him monuments of eternal praise, while I do nothing worthy of regard or memory? Shall he enjoy the favour of the great God, and the comforts of a blessed eternity, but I be wholly deprived of that joyful estate, and plunged into endless sorrows and desperate misery? Shall a Joseph stoutly resist and overcome the strongest temptations, and I be easily

[g] ——— Fortis in armis
Cæsareis Labienus erat.

[h] Chrys. tom. i. p. 77. tom. vi. p. 148. tom. v. Orat. 101. Φύσει γὰρ φιλόκαλον ἅπαν τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰδὼς ὁ Κύριος, &c.

baffled by the least solicitation of vice? Shall a stripling David gloriously triumph over giants, while I basely am vanquished by dwarfs? Shall Job be stripped of all his goods with contentedness, and endure the most grievous pains with patience, while I am discomposed for any small loss, and dismayed by the least cross accident? Shall Abraham here, by his faith and obedience, attain to be called the friend of God, and rest for ever in his glorious and happy bosom, while I deservedly am refused the honour and comfort of that heavenly communion here, and shall hereafter be cast out from that blissful presence, into the dismal mansions of wretched folly and wickedness? Did Paul, once a stubborn Jew, a blind Pharisee, a grievous blasphemer, a bloody persecutor, by a seasonable conversion repair his state, approve himself to God by an eminent zeal for his glory, undergo restless pains, run desperate hazards, and endure all sorts of distresses for the propagation of God's heavenly truth, obtaining thence a never-fading crown of glory in heaven, and a perpetual renown upon earth; and shall I then, who from my youth have been educated in the most true and holy religion, who have by solemn engagements devoted myself thereto, who may without any trouble or danger profess and practise according to that holy discipline, proceed in wicked courses, provoking God's wrath, and attracting his vengeance upon me? No: since the capacities are alike, since the means are common, since the rewards of piety are promiscuously exposed and offered unto all, why should I, by deplorable perverseness or negligence, suffer myself to be deprived of it and its benefits? Why shall not I become as good, as commendable, as happy as any other man? These are the conceits and voices of natural emulation, that mighty passion (so often and by many effects it discovereth itself to be) implanted in our original constitution to be as a spur and incentive, stimulating and inflaming us into the ready undertaking and vigorous pursuit of good purposes; the which perhaps hath produced more noble effects than any other passion or inclination of our souls; for all manner of excellency in know-

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ledge, in prowess, in virtue, how often doth it issue from this source! Doth not the admired fame of men notable for learning, (recorded in story, or subject to present observation,) and a jealousy of being surpassed in accomplishments competent to human nature, sharpen the appetite, and rouse the industry of most scholars, whom neither the love of knowledge nor its apparent usefulness could anywise persuade to bear so much toil in acquist thereof[i]? Do not all histories acquaint us, that the most gallant enterprises and exploits of famous warriors have derived their beginning from an emulation of the glory purchased by their ancestors? (wisdom and valour have thus especially been propagated; one man's signal excellency being parent to the like in many others.) And that this passion may in like manner be subservient to the production of virtue and piety, is plain enough from parity of reason, and from experience; and we have (for farther argument thereof) the Apostle's practice using it to this purpose: St. Paul employed it as an engine for the conversion of his dear countrymen; whom, by raising in them a jealousy of being outstripped, in God's favour, and its effects, by the Gentiles, he endeavoureth to provoke to the embracing of the Christian faith: Rom. xi. 13, 14. x. 19. *I speak to you Gentiles*, saith he, *inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office, εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα, if by any means I provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.* Jam. v. 17. And St. James instigateth us unto fervency of prayer, by minding us, that *Elias was a man of like passions with ourselves;* yet was able by his prayers to shut and open heaven, to procure barrenness and fertility to the earth. And the Apostle to the Hebrews chargeth us, to *consider one another, εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης, καὶ καλῶν ἔργων, so as to provoke one another* (or by mutual emulation to sharpen one another) *to charity and good works.*

4. Examples do work upon modesty, *that preserver*

[i] Tentanda via est, qua me quoque possim
Tollere humo.

and guardian of virtue, as Cicero calls it [k]. For every good action of another doth upbraid, reproach, and shame him, who acteth not conformably thereto. Can we without a trembling heart, and blushing forehead, view the practices of the ancient saints, if ours be altogether unlike them? If they, to please God and secure their salvation, did undergo such prodigious pains in assiduous devotions, abstinences, watchings, and we contrariwise are extremely sluggish, cold, and negligent in the performance of our ordinary duties; if they willingly renounced all sensual complacencies, and we either cherish ourselves in a soft delicacy of life, or wallow in a profane dissolution of manners; if they, to free themselves from distracting cares, voluntarily disburdened themselves of all needless encumbrances, and we are wholly busy in heaping up wealth, and driving on worldly interests; if they gladly embraced and endured the sharpest afflictions, and we are terrified by the thought, are overwhelmed by the sense of the least disappointment, or distasteful occurrence; how can we without extreme regret of mind, and confusion of face, consider their practice, or compare it with ours? It is a profligate impudence of him that can daily hear and read the stories of their doings, without being deeply sensible, and ashamed at the dissonance appearing between their course of life and his. SERM. XXXIV.

5. Example awakens that curiosity, which is natural to us, and of no mean efficacy upon our actions. For whatever we see done, we are apt to be inquisitive concerning it; why and to what purpose it is done, what the grounds are, and what the fruits of the performance; especially if the matter seem considerably important, and the action proceedeth from a person deserving respect; whereof having passed some competent judgment, we are by the same instinct of curiosity farther transported into a desire of discerning by our trial and experience whether the event correspondeth to our expectation; so are we easily induced to imitate the actions of others. By which means as vice ordinarily is con-

[k] Custos omnium virtutum, dedecus fugiens, laudemque maxime consequens verecundia est. *Cic. Part. Rhet.*

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Juven. ——— Faciles imitandis
Turpibus et pravis omnes sumus———

we, as the Satyrist truly observeth of us, *have a great proclivity to follow naughty examples*; so there is from hence some amends, that we have also some inclination to imitate good and worthy precedents; the which is somewhat more strong and vigorous, because countenanced and encouraged by the approbation of reason, our most noble faculty.

6. Examples also do please the mind and fancy in contemplation of them, thence drawing a considerable influence upon practice. No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as history, or the tradition of remarkable examples: even those who have an abhorrency or indisposition toward other studies, (who have no genius to apprehend the more intricate subtleties of science, nor the patience to pursue rational consequences,) are yet often much taken with historical narrations; these striking them with a delectable variety of accidents, with circumstantial descriptions, and sensible representations of objects, do greatly affect and delight their fancies; especially the relation of notable adventures and rare accidents is wont to be attended with great pleasure and satisfaction. And such are those, which present to us the lives and examples of holy men, abounding with wonders of providence and grace: no attempts so gallant, no exploits so illustrious, as those which have been achieved by the faith and patience, by the prudence and courage of the ancient saints; they do far surpass the most famous achievements of Pagan heroes. It was, I dare say, more wonderful, that Abraham with his retinue of household servants should vanquish four potent and victorious kings;

and that Gideon with three hundred unarmed men should discomfit a vastly numerous host, than that Alexander, with a well-appointed army of stout and expert soldiers, should overturn the Persian empire. The siege of Jericho is so far more remarkable than those most famous ones of Numantia and Saguntus, as it is more strange that the blast of trumpets and the noise of people shouting should demolish walls, than the shaking them with rams, or discharging massy stones against them. And he, that carefully will compare the deeds of Sampson and Hercules, shall find, that one true exploit performed by the former doth much in force and strangeness surmount the twelve fabulous labours of the other: no triumphs indeed are comparable to those of piety; no trophies are so magnificent and durable, as those which victorious faith erecteth: that history therefore which reports the *res gestæ*, the acts and sufferings of most pious men, must in reason be esteemed not only the most useful, but also the most pleasant; yielding the sweetest entertainment to well-disposed minds; wherein we see virtue expressed, not in bare idea only, but in actual life, strength, motion; in all its beauty and ornaments: than which no spectacle can be more stately; no object more grateful can be presented to the discerning eye of reason. SERM. XXXIV.

7. We may farthermore consider, that God hath provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect standard of good practice; the example of our Lord: the which declareth the use and efficacy of good example, as one principal instrument of piety. That indeed is the most universal, absolute, and assured pattern; yet doth it not supersede the use of other examples: not only the valour and conduct of the general, but those of inferior officers, yea, the resolution of common soldiers, do serve to animate their fellows. The stars have their season to guide us, as well as the sun; especially when our eyes are so weak, as hardly to bear the day. Even, considering our infirmity, inferior examples by their imperfection sometime have a peculiar advantage. Our Lord's most imitable practice did proceed from an immense virtue of

SERM. XXXIV. divine grace, which we cannot arrive to; it in itself is so perfect and high, that we may not ever reach it: looking upon it may therefore sometimes dazzle and discourage our weakness: but other good men had assistances in measure, such as we may hope to approach unto; they were subject to the difficulties, which we feel; they were exposed to the perils of falling, which we fear: we may therefore hope to march on in a reasonable distance after them; we may, by help of the same grace, come near in transcribing their less exact copy.

To conclude: Since upon so many accounts we are obliged to follow good examples; since they are of so great use toward our proceeding in the way to happiness; thence they conduce to the clear instruction of our understanding, to the forcibly inclining our reason, to the vehement excitement of our passions, to the delightfully affecting our imagination in subserviency to good practice; let us make that due and profitable use of them which we should and may do. Let us, with diligent attention perusing the sacred history, meditate upon the lives of holy men therein propounded as patterns of a persevering faith in God, and conscionable obedience to his commandments. Let the light of their exemplary practice in all kind of piety and virtue continually shine upon our souls, to direct our minds, to inflame our affections, to quicken our resolutions, to detect the errors and correct the faults of our lives, that we, imitating their virtuous and pious conversation, may partake of those comfortable rewards, of that joy and bless whereof they rest possessed. The which God Almighty, and our blessed Saviour, the author and finisher of our faith, by his gracious aid and blessing grant unto us; to whom be all glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen

SERMON XXXV.

ABIDING IN CHRIST TO BE DEMONSTRATED BY WALKING AS CHRIST DID.

1 John ii. 6.

He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk as he walked.

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To *abide in Christ*, to *be in Christ*, to *put on Christ*; and reciprocally, *Christ's being in us*, *living*, *dwelling*, *being formed in us*, and the like expressions, occurring in holy Scripture, do not denote any physical inherence, or essential conjunction between Christ and us, (such as those who affect unintelligible mysteries, rather than plain sense, would conceit,) but only that mutual relation accruing from our profession of being Christ's disciples, our being inserted into his body the Church, being governed by his laws, partaking of his grace, with all the privileges of the Gospel, relying upon his promises, and hoping for eternal salvation from him. By virtue of which relation, we may be said, in a mystical or moral manner, to be united to him, deriving strength and sustenance from him, as the members from the head, the branches from the tree, the other parts of the building from the foundation; by which similitudes this mysterious union is usually expressed in Scripture: in effect, briefly, to be in, or to abide in Christ, implieth no more, but our being truly in faith and practice Christians; so that the meaning of St. John's words seemeth plainly and simply to be this: Whoever pretends to be a Christian, (that is, to believe the doctrine and embrace the discipline of Christ,) ought to walk (that

Rom. viii. 10. Gal. ii. 20. Eph. iii. 17. Gal. iv. 19.

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is, is obliged to order the whole course of his life and actions) as Christ walked, (that is, as Christ did live and converse in the world:) or, it is the duty of every one, professing Christianity, to conform his life to the pattern of Christ's life, to follow his example, to imitate his practice. This is the importance of the words, this the subject of our present discourse.

I. For illustration and confirmation of which point, we may observe, that the holy Apostles do upon all occasions assume this supposition, when they would persuade their disciples to the practice of any virtue, or performance of any duty, enforcing their exhortations, by representing the practice of Christ as an unquestionable ground of obligation, and an effectual inducement thereto. Hence they incite them to holiness: *But*, saith St. Peter, *as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:* to charity; *And walk in love*, saith St. Paul, *as Christ also loved us:* to patience; *Because*, saith St. Peter, *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.* And, *Let us*, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, *run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross:* to humility; *Let*, saith St. Paul, *the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation:* to charitable compliance, and inoffensive demeanour toward others, intimated by St. Paul, when he says, *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved: Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ:* and again, *Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification; for even Christ pleased not himself.* Thus do the Apostles take all occasion, from the like practice of Christ, to persuade the performance of duty; and the strength of their argument lieth upon the evidence of this supposition, that all professing themselves Christians are especially obliged to imitate Christ's example. And their authority may be backed and enforced by several reasons.

1 Pet. i. 15.
Eph. v. 2.
1 Pet. ii. 21.
Heb. xii. 1, 2.
Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7.
1 Cor. x. 33. xi. 1.
Rom. xv. 2, 3.

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II. Doing so hath a reasonableness and decency grounded upon our relations to Christ: it is fit and comely that the manners of the disciple should be regulated by those of his master; that the servant should not, in his garb and demeanour, dissent or vary from his lord; that the subject should conform his humour to the fashion of his prince; especially that we should thus comply and conform to such a Master, such a Lord, such a Prince, whom (upon highest considerations) by a most voluntary choice, and in a most solemn manner, we have absolutely devoted ourselves unto: this reason our Lord doth himself urge: *Ye*, saith he to his disciples, *call me Master, and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am: if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.* John xiii. 13, 14.

III. Following Christ's example is requisite to demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love, and reverence to him. It is the most natural way of testifying affection and respect, to imitate the manners of those persons, who are the objects of those acts and dispositions, to esteem what they approve, to delight in what they affect, and consequently (since actions do proceed from affections) to do as they do. Contrary actions are plain arguments of contrary judgments, inclinations, and affections. Who can imagine we sincerely believe in Christ, or heartily love him, or truly honour him, that seeth us to loathe what he liked, or affect what he detested; to contemn what he prized, or value what he despised; to neglect what he pursued, or embrace what he avoided? But if our lives resemble his, any man will thence collect our respect and affection to him: this argument our Saviour doth also intimate: *By this*, saith he, *shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another;* that is, it will be an evident sign and strong argument, that ye really do believe in, love, and honour me, if ye imitate me in my charity. John xiii. 35.

IV. By pretending to be Christians we acknowledge the transcendent goodness, worth, and excellency of our Saviour; that he was incomparably better and wiser than

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any person ever was, or could be; that he always acted with the highest reason, out of the most excellent disposition of mind, in order to the best purposes; and that his practice therefore reasonably should be the rule and pattern of ours. For the best and exactest in every kind is the measure of the rest. All that would obtain exquisite skill in any art or faculty, think best to imitate the works of the best masters therein: a painter, to draw after the pieces of Zeuxis or Apelles, of Raphael or Titian; an orator, to speak in the style of Cicero or Demosthenes; a soldier, to emulate the military achievements of Hannibal or Cæsar: in like manner, reason requireth, if we would live well and happily, that we should endeavour to conform our practice to that of our Saviour, the most perfect mirror of all virtue and goodness.

V. The practice of our Saviour did thoroughly agree with his doctrine and law; he required nothing of us, which he did not eminently perform himself. He *fulfilled* in deed, as well as taught in word, *all righteousness*. He was not *ignava opera, philosopha sententia*, like those masters of philosophy, so frequently taxed and derided by the Satirists [k]; who, by a horrid garb, supercilious looks, and loud declamations, would seem to discountenance those vices which themselves practised; nor like those hypocritical lawyers in the Gospel, who laded other men with *heavy burdens*, such as themselves would *not* Luke xi. 46. *touch with one of their fingers:* no, he imposed nothing on us, which he did not first bear upon his own shoulders: the strictness of his life did, in all respects, correspond with the severity of his precepts, or rather did indeed much exceed them. They therefore who pretend to believe his doctrine, and avow themselves bound to observe his law, are consequently engaged to follow his practice, in which his doctrine and law are signally exemplified.

VI. It being the design of divine goodness, in sending

[k] Οὐδὲν ψυχρότερον τοῦ κατὰ λόγους φιλοσοφοῦντος. *Chrys.*
[τ] Ὧν τὸ βῆμα τοῦ τρόπου κατήγορον. *Naz.*

our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from sin and misery, to instruct us in the knowledge, and excite us to the practice of all virtue, and thereby to qualify us for the enjoyment of a blessed immortality; effecting all this in a way agreeable to our natural condition and capacity; there could not be devised any more powerful means, or more convenient method, of accomplishing those excellent purposes, than by propounding such an example, and obliging us to comply therewith: the which may appear, 1. By considering in general the advantage and efficacy that good example is apt to have upon practice; 2. By weighing the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example above all others, in order to those ends; and, 3. By surveying the particular instances of imitable goodness represented in the life of our Saviour. SERM. XXXV.

1. Good example is naturally an effectual instrument of good practice; for that it doth most compendiously, pleasantly, and easily instruct; representing things to be done at one view, in a full body, clothed with all their modes and circumstances; it recommends them to us by the most plain and plausible way of reasoning, (and withal the most sure and safe,) the authority of wise and good men; it encourageth by evidently declaring the practicableness of rules prescribed; it kindleth and rouseth men's courage by a kind of contagion, as one flame doth kindle another; it raiseth a worthy emulation of doing laudable things, which we see done; or of obtaining a share in the commendations and rewards of virtue. It urgeth modesty, breeding shame and regret in them who act contrarily thereto; it awakeneth curiosity, thereby producing a desire to make trial of what it proposeth; it affecteth and pleaseth the fancy, thereby insinuating an approbation, admiration, and liking of the good things, which it representeth: briefly, it exciteth and engageth all our passions, setting on work all those powerful springs of activity; it consequently is, in its own nature, an efficacious mean of good practice. This we may in general say of all good example; but,

2. More especially the example of Christ doth, in effi-

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cacy and influence upon good practice, surpass all others; upon several accounts.

First, In that it is a sure and infallible rule, an entire and perfect rule of practice; deficient in no part, swerving in no circumstance from truth and right, which privileges are competent to no other example. The practice of the best men is not always to be imitated, nor ever absolutely as a certain ground of action; it is to be (so far as we have ability) considered, examined, and compared to more certain rules, (the divine laws and the principles of right reason,) according to their agreement with which they are to be followed: they are indeed (before trial of the case) probable arguments of what is done by them being good and lawful; they do outweigh slender and obscure reasonings about the goodness of things; they may, when opportunity, leisure, or ability of farther inquiry and judgment about things are wanting, serve to direct us; but they are not throughly sure rules, or perfect measures of our duty. We should beware lest we be seduced even by holy persons; and, therefore, with circumspection and caution should peruse their story and contemplate their demeanour; whereof those which are explicitly commended, or allowed by the divine judgment, we may, being assured that we are in the same circumstances, safely follow, (taking them for monitories, encouragements, and excitements to our duty:) but those that are directly condemned by the same sentence, or apparently devious from God's law, we as carefully should avoid; [1] such as are of a doubtful and unaccountable nature we are to suspend about, and not to ground upon; nor to argue from the fact of the rightfulness of them; the safest way being always (as we are able) to have recourse to the simple, plain, and perspicuous precepts of God, and dictates of reason. For the best men have always been subject to errors and infirmities; the fountain of original corruption in them was never so dried up, or closely stopped, but that some impure streams have bubbled forth; the fire

[1] It was ill said of Seneca: Catoni ebrietas objecta est, et facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit hoc crimen, honestum, quam turpem Catonem.

of natural concupiscence was never so utterly quenched, but that sometimes it would blaze, or smoke out in bad actions; that intestine enemy, the flesh, was never throughly subdued, nor the body of sin quite slain and mortified in any other mortal man. Good men have ever had some foul spots, or deforming wrinkles, appearing in the beauteous face of their conversation; they have had their inequalities and indispositions of humour, their ebbs of devotion, their fits of sloth, their wanton freaks, their slips often, and sometimes their falls; they have been subject to be deluded by mistake, to be surprised by inadvertency, to be transported by passion, to be swayed by temper, to be biassed by interest, to be allured by temptation into false and unwarrantable proceedings; they might sometimes fail in the substance, oftener in the degree, in the manner, in the circumstances of action; we find them often complaining of their proneness to do amiss, bemoaning the wretched frailty of their state; yea, often repenting and bitterly mourning for their actual transgressions: there hardly is any saint, recorded in Scripture, without some blemish in his actions; which shews our weakness, and engageth us to be wary. They were, indeed, endowed with sufficient competences of divine light, and graces suitable to their private needs, or to the public exigencies of their times, places, occasions, and affairs; but not with the perfection and extreme degrees thereof, requisite to preserve them from all miscarriage; so that we are not always, or in all cases, to conform our actions to their examples: we must not learn to equivocate of Abraham; nor to circumvent of Jacob; nor to be choleric of Moses, (so as in our excess of passion to break the tables of the divine law;) nor of Eli, to be fondly affectionate or indulgent to our relations; nor of David, to utter uncharitable imprecations; nor to dissemble of St. Peter; nor of St. Paul to revile magistrates. The use we are to make of many practices of most eminently pious men, is not to be misguided by them into wrong paths; not by them to authorise or excuse our presumptuous misdeeds; but to make us to admire and to rely upon the

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divine mercy, which so graciously did overlook and pardon their offences: to provoke us to an imitation of their repentance; to render us watchful in shunning those rocks, upon which persons so skilful in the conduct of their lives have dashed; to engage us to humility, by considering so manifest arguments of our frailty, and our being obnoxious to greater and more frequent miscarriages.

But as to our Saviour's example, the case is quite different; for though he did miracles as God, he commanded as Christ; he did many heroical things in discharge of his office, &c. in which things we cannot, or may not, imitate him: yet, whatever in his life was, in its own nature, imitable by us, which did not exceed our natural powers, nor disagree with our condition and quality: whatever he as a man, in a private capacity, as subject to the divine law, with regard thereto, performed, we may, with all freedom, confidence, and security, imitate. Nor can so doing incur any danger of error or guilt; for we cannot, without great folly and impiety, suspect any fault or imperfection in his most pure, righteous, and innocent life: he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners;* he was *a lamb without blemish and without spot; he was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. He did no sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth. God gave him of his Spirit not by measure.* These are the voices and elogies of the sacred oracles concerning him. The heavenly extraction even of his humanity derived no original contagion from our polluted stock, and rendered him free from the common incentives of evil concupiscence. The inseparable presence of the Divinity with him (*for God was with him*, as St. Peter expressed it,) and the unrestrained effusion of the Holy Spirit upon him, did preserve him from all defilements of infectious conversation in this world; a clear evidence of divine light always shining in his soul, directed him infallibly in the paths of truth and righteousness: no tempest of cross accidents without, nor any estuations of internal passion, could discompose the steady calm and serenity of his mind; no allurement of worldly pleasure, nor temptation

Heb. vii. 26. 1 Pet. i. 19. Heb. iv. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 22. John iii. 34. Acts x. 38

of profit, could pervert his practice, or seduce his heart; being inflamed with most intense love of God, and entire charity to men: so that his example must needs be a perfect rule and sure direction to us. Which consideration cannot but yield great encouragement and comfort in following him; freeing us from all anxious doubt and suspicion of mistake in our spiritual progress; like the presence of a sure guide to the bewildered traveller; like the appearance of a star to the weather-beaten mariner; like that miraculous pillar of fire, which safely conducted the wandering Israelites through the unknown and unfrequented passages of a wild desert. But farther,

Secondly, The peculiar excellency of our Lord's example appears, in that he was, by the divine Providence, to this very purpose designed, and sent into the world, as well by his practice as by his doctrine, to be the guide and master of holy life and obedience to all men; and did accordingly propound to himself this end of his actions, that he might be imitated by his disciples. So he declareth himself as to some considerable passages of his life; and thence, by reasonable inference, we may suppose the same of the rest, so far as they might be conducible to the same end; especially, since of some performances, no other, or no so probable account can be given, as that they were done for exemplarity: for why should he fast, who had no sins to be repented of, no rebellious flesh to be tamed, no intemperate desires to be mortified, no coldness of devotion to be enlivened thereby[a]? And why did he offer himself to be baptized, who had no original stain to be cleansed of, no fault to be forgiven, no want of special grace to be conferred? Why, but, by his exemplary fulfilling all righteousness, to teach us ready obedience to all divine institutions, and peaceable compliance with all laudable customs? So an ancient writer wisely descanteth upon those practices of our Saviour: *He was*, saith that writer, *baptized, and fasted, not because*

[a] Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἐνήστευσεν, οὐκ αὐτὸς ταύτης δεόμενος, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς παιδεύων. *Chrys.* tom. ii. p. 81.

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John xv. 12. *This*, saith he, *is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Why was he in his disposition so meek and gentle, in his conversation so humble and lowly? To this purpose, that we might of him learn

Mat. xi. 29. those excellent qualities: *Learn of me*, saith he, *for I am*

1 Pet. ii. 21. *meek and lowly in heart.* And St. Peter saith, *That Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps;* signifying that he designed his patience to be exemplary to us. If then our Saviour, in his humility, his charity, his meekness, his patience, intended his life to be exemplary, and expressly propounded it as such; then certainly, in his devotion, his self-denial, his justice, in all other virtues, he had the same intention; and what he intended, God designed to be; and what God designed to be, was doubtlessly eminently conducible to the end designed; and therefore our Saviour's life was most exemplary. Other saints indeed were of very exemplary conversation; but either proved to be so, according to ordinary course of Providence, without any peculiar designation thereto, (their free choice conspiring with God's grace in producing good works shining before men,) or

[b] Ἐδαπτίσθη καὶ ἐνήστευσεν ἐκ αὐτὸς ἀπορυπώσεως, ἢ νηστείας χρείαν ἔχων, ἢ καθαρσεως, ὁ τῇ φύσει καθαρὸς καὶ ἅγιος, ἀλλ' ἵνα Ἰωάννῃ ἀληθειαν προσμαρτυρήσῃ, καὶ ἡμῖν ὑπογραμμὸν παράσχηται.

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at most by a restrained determination to some particular time, place, or people; as Moses was chosen and appointed to conduct the Israelites; *David was taken from the sheep-fold, and following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob God's people, and Israel his inheritance;* Jeremy was sanctified from his birth, and ordained to be a prophet of the nations in his times; and St. Paul was separated from the womb to be a preacher of the Christian faith: these, and such like eminent persons, Almighty God, in his goodness, was pleased to raise up, to be, in their generations, as it were, partial and temporary saviours, as by declaring his will, and revealing his truth to men, so by guiding them with a remarkable example: these *burning and shining lamps* (as St. John the Baptist is called) were indeed like lamps set up in some particular families, with a competent lustre, to dispel the present darkness, shining within their definite sphere, and for a determinate time: but our Saviour, like the sun, fixed in a higher orb, was ordained with a perpetual and unconfined splendour to illuminate the universe, to cause a general and everlasting day of healthful and comfortable knowledge over the face of the whole earth. He was *that true light, which enlighteneth every man coming into the world; He was prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the nations;* (not Israel only, but the *nations* indefinitely, or all nations.) He was ordained, not commander of a single regiment, or party, but captain general of all mankind, to conduct all those who were disposed to follow him, by a victorious obedience, into that triumphant estate of everlasting joy and happiness. His example doth belong unto us all, without exception, by divine ordination; for *we*, all of us, *were* (to use St. Paul's expression) *predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son; that he might be the first-born among many brethren.* So it was, and so it became the infinite goodness and philanthropy of God, to bestow upon mankind one perfectly good example, inviting to all virtue, and so fit to countervail all those many bad ones, wherewith we converse, enticing to vice; to set forth, among so many

Acts vii. 35. Psal. cvi. 23. Psal. lxxviii. 70, 71. Jer. i. 5.

John v. 35. Λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων.

John i. 9. Luke ii. 31, 32. Heb. ii. 10. Rom. viii. 29.

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John v. 19. "Α γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ.

imperfect ones, one accomplished piece of his heavenly workmanship, able to attract the eyes and ravish the hearts of all men with admiration of its excellent worth and beauty; to offer to our view some discernible representation of his invisible perfections; that so we might better be induced and inured to apprehend, love, reverence, and imitate himself by contemplation of that most exquisite image of him; to give an evident proof that the highest virtue is not unpracticable, that human nature, by aid and guidance of the Divine Spirit, may arrive to the sublimest pitch of perfection in goodness: in fine, to expose such a common, sweet, and lovely pattern, as we with assurance, joy, and comfort may follow.

Thirdly, Our Saviour's example is especially influential upon practice, in that it was, by an admirable temperament, more accommodated for imitation than any others have been; that the perfect copy of his most holy life seems more easy to be transcribed, than the ruder draughts of other holy men: for though it were written with an incomparable fairness, delicacy, and evenness; not slurred with any foul blot, not any where declining from exact straightness; yet were the lineaments thereof exceedingly plain and simple; not by any gaudy flourishes, or impertinent intrigues, rendered difficult to studious imitation; so that even women and children, the weakest and meanest sort of people, as well as the most wise and ingenious, might easily perceive its design, and with good success write after it. His was a gentle and steady light, bright indeed, but not dazzling the eye; warm, but not scorching the face of the most intent beholder; no affected singularities, no supercilious morosities, no frivolous ostentations of seemingly high, but really fruitless performances; nothing that might deter a timorous, discourage a weak, or offend a scrupulous disciple, is observable in his practice: but, on the contrary, his conversation was full of lowliness and condescension, of meekness and sweetness, of openness and candid simplicity; apt to invite and allure all men to approach toward it, and with satisfaction to enjoy it. He did not seclude himself into the constant re-

tirements of a cloister, nor into the farther recesses of a wilderness, (as some others have done,) but conversed freely and indifferently with all sorts of men, even the most contemptible and odious sorts of men, *publicans* and *sinners;* like the sun, with an impartial bounty, liberally imparting his pleasant light and comfortable warmth to all. He used no uncouth austerities in habit or diet; but complied, in his garb, with ordinary usage, and sustained his life with such food as casual opportunity did offer; so that his indifferency in that kind yielded matter of obloquy against him from the fond admirers of a humorous preciseness. His devotions (though exceedingly sprightful and fervent) were not usually extended to a tedious and exhausting durance, nor strained into ecstatical transports, charming the natural senses, and overpowering the reason; but calm, steady, and regular, such as persons of honest intention and hearty desire (though not endued with high fancy, or stirring passion) might readily imitate. His zeal was not violent or impetuous, except upon very great reason, and extraordinary occasion, when the honour of God, or good of men, was much concerned. He was not rigorous in the observance of traditional rites and customs, such as were needlessly burdensome, or which contained in them more of formal shew than of real fruit, yet behaved himself orderly and peaceably, giving due respect to the least institution of God, and complying with the innocent customs of men: thereby pointing out unto us the middle way between peevish superstition and boisterous faction; which, as always the most honest, so commonly is the most safe and pleasant way to walk in. He delighted not to discourse of sublime mysteries, (although his deep wisdom comprehended all,) nor of subtile speculations and intricate questions, such as might amuse and perplex, rather than instruct and profit his auditors; but usually did feed his auditors with the most common and useful truths, and that in the most familiar and intelligible language; not disdaining the use of vulgar sayings, and trivial proverbs, when they best served to insinuate his wholesome meaning into their minds.

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His whole life was spent in exercise of the most easy and pleasant, yet most necessary and substantial duties; obedience to God, charity, meekness, humility, patience, and the like; the which, that he might practise with the greatest latitude, and with most advantage for general imitation, he did not addict himself to any particular way of life, but disentangled himself from all worldly care and business; choosing to appear in the most free, though very mean condition; that he might indifferently instruct, by his example, persons of all callings, degrees, and capacities; especially the most, that is, the poor; and might have opportunity, in the face of the world, to practise the most difficult of necessary duties; lowliness, contentedness, abstinence from pleasure, contempt of the world, sufferance of injuries and reproaches. Thus suited and tempered by divine wisdom was the life of our blessed Saviour, that all sorts of men might be in an equal capacity to follow him, that none might be offended, affrighted, or discouraged; but that all might be pleased, delighted, enamoured, with the homely majesty and plain beauty thereof. And in effect so it happened, that ordinary people (the weakest, but sincerest and unprejudiced sort of men) were greatly taken with, most admired and applauded his deportment; many of them readily embracing his doctrine, and devoting themselves to his discipline; while only the proud, envious, covetous, and ambitious *scribes* and *lawyers* rejected his excellent doctrine, scorned the heavenly simplicity and holy integrity of his life.

Fourthly, The transcendant excellency of our Lord's example appeareth, in that it is attended with the greatest obligations, (of gratitude and ingenuity, of justice, of interest, of duty,) mightily engaging us to follow it. For it is not the example of an ordinary or inconsiderable person, of a stranger, of one indifferent or unrelated to us; but of a glorious prince, of heavenly extraction, (the first-born Son of the Almighty God, sole heir of eternal Majesty,) of our Lord and Master, to whom we are for ever bound by indispensable bands of duty and obedience; of our great Captain, who hath undertaken to subdue our

enemies, and hath obliged us to follow his conduct, in a holy warfare, against them, by most solemn sacraments and vows; of our best Friend, from whom we have received the greatest favours and benefits imaginable; of our most gracious Saviour, who, for our sake, hath voluntarily sustained most bitter pains and shameful contumelies: having sacrificed his dearest heart-blood to redeem us from intolerable slaveries, and from extremities of horrible misery; of him, to whom, in all respects, we do owe the highest respect, love, and observance that can be. Now it is the nature and property both of respect and love (such as upon so many grounds we owe to him) to beget, in the person respecting and loving, an endeavour, answerable to the degrees of those dispositions, of conforming to, and resembling, the qualities and manners of the person respected or beloved. We see how readily children do comply with the customs of their parents and tutors; servants of their masters and patrons; subjects of their princes and governors, with a studious earnestness composing themselves to express in their carriage, not only their good or their indifferent fashions and manners, but even their most palpable deformities and vices; insomuch, that a whole family, a city, a nation, may be debauched from its sobriety, or reformed from its dissoluteness, even instantly, by the example of one person, who, by his place, power, and authority, challengeth extraordinary reverence from men: and much greater influence hath hearty love to transform our manners into an agreement with the manners of him we love: *What a man loves, that he imitateth so much as lies in his power*, saith Hierocles, truly. For love being founded on a good esteem, and a benevolent inclination thence resulting, engageth the affectionate person to admire the qualities of him he affecteth, to observe his deportments, to make the most advantageous construction of what he doeth; to fancy he doeth all things with best reason and discretion; to deem, therefore, that all his actions deserve and require imitation: hence doth love either find, or soon produce, a competent similitude in the parties, (a similitude of mind, of will, of

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Ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῷ τις καὶ μιμεῖται ὅσον οἷόν τε. Hier.

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inclination, and affection, an *eadem velle et nolle :*) it doth forcibly attract as to a vicinity of place and converse, so to an agreement of affections and actions ; it uniteth the most distant, it reconcileth the most opposite, it turneth the most discordant natures into a sweet consent and harmony of disposition and demeanour. We then having the greatest reason both to honour and love our Saviour, surely his example being duly studied and considered by us, must needs obtain a superlative influence upon our practice, and be very powerful to conform and assimilate it to his.

These considerations may suffice to shew the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example in virtue, and efficacy upon our practice ; the same more abundantly might be deduced from a survey of the most considerable particulars, in which we may and ought to imitate him. But the time will not suffer us to launch forth into so vast a sea of discourse. I shall only, therefore, from the premises, exhort, that if any earnest desire of happiness, any high esteem of virtue, any true affection to genuine sanctity do lodge in our breasts, we should apply this most excellent means of attaining them ; the study and endeavour of imitating the life of our Lord. If we have in us any truth and sincerity, and do not vainly prevaricate in our profession of being Christ's disciples, and votaries of that most holy institution, let us manifest it by a real conformity to the practice of him who is our Master, and author of our faith. If we have in us any wisdom, or sober consideration of things, let us employ it in following the steps of that infallible guide, designed by Heaven to lead us in the straight, even, and pleasant ways of righteousness, unto the possession of everlasting bliss. If we do verily like and approve the practice of Christ, and are affected with the innocent, sweet, and lovely comeliness thereof, let us declare such our mind by a sedulous care to resemble it. If we bear any honour and reverence, any love and affection to Christ ; if we are at all sensible of our relations, our manifold obligations, our duties to our great Lord, our best Friend, our most gracious Redeemer ;

let us testify it by a zealous care to become like to him: let a lively image of his most righteous and innocent, most holy and pious, most pure and spotless life be ever present to our fancies; so as to inform our judgments, to excite our affections, to quicken our endeavours, to regulate our purposes, to correct our mistakes, to direct, amend, and sanctify our whole lives. Let us, with incessant diligence of study, meditate upon the best of histories, wherein the tenor of his divine practice is represented to us; revolving frequently in our thoughts all the most considerable passages thereof, entertaining them with devout passions, impressing them on our memories, and striving to express them in our conversations: let us endeavour continually to walk in the steps of our Lord, and *to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;* which that we may be able to do, do thou, O blessed Redeemer, draw us; draw us by the cords of thy love; draw us by the sense of thy goodness; draw us by the incomparable worth and excellency of thy person; draw us by the unspotted purity and beauty of thy example; draw us by the merit of thy precious death, and by the power of thy Holy Spirit; *Draw us*, good Lord, *and we shall run after thee.* Amen. SERM. XXXV.

Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; give us grace, that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit; and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Coll. after Easter, 2.

SERMON XXXVI.

OF SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

LUKE xxii. 42.

Matt. xxvi. 39. *Nevertheless let not my will, but thine, be done.*

SERM. XXXVI. THE great controversy, managed with such earnestness and obstinacy between God and man, is this, whose will shall take place, his or ours. Almighty God, by whose constant protection and great mercy we subsist, doth claim to himself the authority of regulating our practice and disposing our fortunes: but we affect to be our own masters and carvers; not willingly admitting any law, not patiently brooking any condition, which doth not sort with our fancy and pleasure. To make good his right, God bendeth all his forces, and applieth all proper means both of sweetness and severity, (persuading us by arguments, soliciting us by entreaties, alluring us by fair promises, scaring us by fierce menaces, indulging ample benefits to us, inflicting sore corrections on us, working in us and upon us by secret influences of grace, by visible dispensations of providence;) yet so it is, that commonly nothing doth avail, our will opposing itself with invincible resolution and stiffness.

Here indeed the business pincheth; herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consisteth, in bending *that iron sinew*; in bringing our proud hearts to stoop, and our sturdy humours to buckle, so as to surrender and resign our wills to the just, the wise, the gracious will of our God, prescribing our duty, and assign-

ing our lot unto us. We may accuse our nature, but it is our pleasure; we may pretend weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the guilty cause of our misdemeanors; for by God's help (which doth always prevent our needs, and is never wanting to those who seriously desire it) we may be as good as we please, if we can please to be good; there is nothing within us that can resist, if our wills do yield themselves up to duty: to conquer our reason is not hard; for what reason of man can withstand the infinite cogency of those motives which induce to obedience? What can be more easy, than by a thousand arguments, clear as day, to convince any man, that to cross God's will is the greatest absurdity in the world, and that there is no madness comparable thereto? Nor is it difficult, if we resolve upon it, to govern any other part or power of our nature[a]; for what cannot we do, if we are willing? What inclination cannot we check, what appetite cannot we restrain, what passion cannot we quell or moderate? What faculty of our soul, or member of our body, is not obsequious to our will? Even half the resolution with which we pursue vanity and sin, would serve to engage us in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

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Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 12. in 1 Cor. Or. 17. tom. v. Or. 28, 43.

Wherefore in overcoming our will the stress lieth; this is that impregnable fortress, which everlastingly doth hold out against all the batteries of reason and of grace; which no force of persuasion, no allurement of favour, no discouragement of terror can reduce: this puny, this impotent thing it is, which grappleth with Omnipotency, and often in a manner baffleth it: and no wonder, for that God doth not intend to overpower our will, or to make any violent impression on it, but only to *draw it* (as it is in the Prophet) *with the cords of a man*, or by rational inducements to win its consent and compliance: our service is not so considerable to him, that he should extort it from us; nor doth he value our happiness at so low a rate, as to obtrude it on us. His victory indeed were no true victory over us, if he should gain it by main force, or without the concurrence of our will; our

Hos. xi. 4.

[a] Quodcunque sibi imperavit animus obtinuit. *Sen. de Ira*, ii. 12.

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works not being our works, if they do not issue from our will; and our will not being our will, if it be not free: to compel it were to destroy it, together with all the worth of our virtue and obedience: wherefore the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood, and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will otherwise, than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him [b]: if ever we be conquered, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing ourselves: *we must take the yoke upon us;* for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his word, he attracteth us by his grace, but we must *freely come unto him.*

Our will indeed, of all things, is most our own; the only gift, the most proper sacrifice we have to offer; which therefore God doth chiefly desire, doth most highly prize, doth most kindly accept from us. Seeing then our duty chiefly moveth on this hinge, the free submission and resignation of our will to the will of God; it is this practice, which our Lord (who came to guide us in the way to happiness, not only as a teacher by his word and excellent doctrine, but as a leader by his actions and perfect example) did especially set before us, as in the constant tenor of his life, so particularly in that great exigency which occasioned these words, wherein renouncing and deprecating his own will, he did express an entire submission to God's will, a hearty complacence therein, and a serious desire that it might take place.

For the fuller understanding of which case we may consider, that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, and *in all things* (bating sin) *like unto us*, had a natural human will, attended with senses, appetites, and affections, apt from objects incident to receive congruous impressions of pleasure and pain; so that whatever is innocently grateful and pleasant to us, that he relished with delight, and

[b] Ἐπὶ τοῦτο ᾗ αὐτὰ διαβάλλει τὰ ἀγαθὰ εἰ μὴ τοιαύτη αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ φύσις, ὡς ᾗ ἑκόντας προσδραμεῖν, ᾗ χάριν ἴσχειν πολλήν. *Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. 2.*

thence did incline to embrace; whatever is distasteful and afflictive to us, that he resented with grief, and thence was moved to eschew: to this probably he was liable in a degree beyond our ordinary rate; for that in him nature was most perfect, his complexion very delicate, his temper exquisitely sound and fine; for so we find, that by how much any man's constitution is more sound, by so much he hath a smarter gust of what is agreeable or offensive to nature: if perhaps sometimes infirmity of body, or distemper of soul (a savage ferity, a stupid dulness, a fondness of conceit, or stiffness of humour, supported by wild opinions, or vain hopes) may keep men from being thus affected by sensible objects; yet in him pure nature did work vigorously, with a clear apprehension and lively sense, according to the design of our Maker, when into our constitution he did implant those passive faculties, disposing objects to affect them so and so, for our need and advantage; if this be deemed weakness, it is a weakness connected with our nature, which he therewith did take, and *with which*, as the apostle saith, *he was encompassed.* Such a will our Lord had, and it was requisite that he should have it, that he thence might be qualified to discharge the principal instances of obedience, for procuring God's favour to us, and for setting an exact pattern before us; for God imposing on him duties to perform, and dispensing accidents to endure, very cross to that natural will, in his compliance and acquiescence thereto, his obedience was thoroughly tried; his virtue did shine most brightly; therefore, as the apostle saith, *he was in all points tempted;* thence, as to meritorious capacity and exemplary influence, *he was perfected through suffering.*

Ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περίκειται ἀσθένειαν. Heb. v. 2.

Heb. iv. 15. ii. 10, 18.

Hence was the whole course of his life and conversation among men so designed, so modelled, as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that human will, and closing with the Divine pleasure: it was predicted of him, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;* and of himself he affirmed, *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me:* whereas therefore such a practice is lit-

Heb. x. 7. Psal. xl. 7. John vi. 38. v. 30. iv. 34.

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tle seen in achieving easy matters, or in admitting pleasant occurrences; it was ordered for him, that he should encounter the roughest difficulties, and be engaged in circumstances most harsh to natural apprehension and appetite; so that if we trace the footsteps of his life from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we can hardly mark any thing to have befallen him apt to satisfy the will of nature. Nature liketh respect, and loatheth contempt; therefore was he born of mean parentage, and in a most homely condition; therefore did he live in no garb, did assume no office, did exercise no power, did meddle in no affairs, which procure to men consideration and regard; therefore an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a loose companion, a seditious incendiary, were the titles of honour and the elogies of praise conferred on him; therefore was he exposed to the lash of every slanderous, every scurrilous, every petulant and ungoverned tongue.

Nature doth affect the good opinion and good-will of men, especially when due in grateful return for great courtesy and beneficence; nor doth any thing more grate thereon, than abuse of kindness: therefore could he (the world's great Friend and Benefactor) say, *The world hateth me;* therefore were those, whom he with so much charity and bounty had instructed, had fed, had cured of diseases, (both corporal and spiritual,) so ready to clamour, and commit outrage upon him; therefore could he thus expostulate, *Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?* Therefore did his kindred slight him, therefore did his disciples abandon him, therefore did the grand traitor issue from his own bosom; therefore did that whole nation, which he chiefly sought and laboured to save, conspire to persecute him, with most rancorous spite and cruel misusage.

n vii. 7.

John x. 32.

John xiii. 18.

Nature loveth plentiful accommodations, and abhorreth to be pinched with any want: therefore was extreme penury appointed to him; he had no revenue, no estate, no certain livelihood, not *so much as a house where to lay his head*, or a piece of money to discharge the tax for it; he owed his ordinary support to alms, or voluntary beneficence; he was

Matt. iii. 20. xvii. 25. xxi. 19. Luke viii. 3.

to seek his food from a *fig-tree on the way;* and sometimes was beholden for it to the courtesy of Publicans; διʼ ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, *He was*, saith St Paul, *a beggar for us.* SERM. XXXVI. 2 Cor. viii. 9.

Nature delighteth in ease, in quiet, in liberty: therefore did he spend his days in continual labour, in restless travel, in endless vagrancy, *going about and doing good;* ever hastening thither, whither the needs of men did call, or their benefit invite; therefore did he *take on him the form of a servant*, and was among his own followers *as one that ministereth*; therefore he *pleased not himself*, but suited his demeanour to the state and circumstances of things, complied with the manners and fashions, comported with the humours and infirmities of men. John iv. 6. Matt. iv. 23. ix. 35. Acts x. 38. Phil. ii. 7. Luke xxii. 27. Mark vi. 6.

Nature coveteth good success to its designs and undertakings, hardly brooking to be disappointed and defeated in them: therefore was he put to water dry sticks and to wash Negroes, that is, to instruct a most dull and stupid, to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation; therefore his ardent desires, his solicitous cares, his painful endeavours for the good of men did obtain so little fruit, had indeed a contrary effect, rather aggravating their sins than removing them, rather hardening than turning their hearts, rather plunging them deeper into perdition, than rescuing them from it; therefore so much in vain did he, in numberless miraculous works, display his power and goodness, convincing few, converting fewer by them; therefore, although he taught with most powerful authority, with most charming gracefulness, with most convincing evidence, yet, *Who*, could he say, *hath believed our report?* Though he most earnestly did invite and allure men to him, offering the richest boons that heaven itself could dispense, yet, *Ye will not*, was he forced to say, *come unto me, that ye may be saved:* although, with assiduous fervency of affection, he strove to reclaim them from courses tending to their ruin, yet how he prospered, sad experience declareth, and we may learn from that doleful complaint, *How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her* Luke iv. 22, 32. Joh. xii. 38. Joh. v. 40. Luke xiii. 34. xix. 42.

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brood under her wings, but ye would not! ἐκ ἠθελήσατε, your will did not concur, your will did not submit.

In fine, natural will seeketh pleasure, and shunneth pain: but what pleasure did he taste? what inclination, what appetite, what sense did he gratify? How did he feast, or revel? How, but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by passing whole nights in prayer and retirement for devotion upon the cold mountains? What sports had he, what recreation did he take, but feeling incessant gripes of compassion, and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep? In what conversation could he divert himself, but among those, whose doltish incapacity and forward humour did wring from his patience those words, *How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* What music did he hear? What but the rattlings of clamorous obloquy, and furious accusations against him? To be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked; to be styled a king, and treated as a slave; to be spit on, to be buffetted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross; these were the delights which our Lord enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life and the notable prosperities of his fortune: such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it, or fainting under it; but proceeding on in the performance of all his duty and prosecution of his great designs with undaunted courage, with unwearied industry, with undisturbed tranquillity and satisfaction of mind.

Mark i. 13, 35. Luke v. 16. Joh. iv. 6, 31. Luke vi. 12. Matt. xiv. 23. xviii. 12. Matt. xvii. 7.

Had indeed his condition and fortune been otherwise framed; had he come into the world qualified with a noble extraction; had he lived in a splendid equipage; had he enjoyed a plentiful estate and a fair reputation; had he been favoured and caressed by men; had he found a current of prosperous success; had safety, ease, and pleasure waited on him; where had been the pious resignation of his will, where the precious merit of his

obedience, where the glorious lustre of his example? How then had our frailty in him become victorious over all its enemies; how had he triumphed over the solicitations and allurements of the flesh, over the frowns and flatteries of the world, over the malice and fury of hell? How then could he have so demonstrated his immense charity toward us, or laid so mighty obligations upon us? SERM. XXXVI.

Such in general was the case, and such the deportment of our Lord: but there was somewhat peculiar, and beyond all this occurring to him, which drew forth the words of our text: God had tempered for him a potion of all the most bitter and loathsome ingredients that could be; a drop whereof no man ever hath, or could endure to sip; for he was not only to undergo whatever load human rage could impose, of ignominious disgrace and grievous pain; but to feel dismal agonies of spirit, and those *unknown sufferings*[c], which God alone could inflict, God only could sustain: *Behold, and see*, he might well say, *if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?* He was to labour with pangs of charity, and through his heart to be pierced with deepest commiseration of our wretched case: he was to crouch under the burthen of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) ever committed by mankind: he was to pass through the hottest furnace of divine vengeance, and by his blood to quench the wrath of heaven flaming out against iniquity: he was to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell, belching fire and brimstone on his face: his grief was to supply the defects of our remorse, and his suffering in those few moments to countervail the eternal torments due to us: he was to bear the hiding of God's face, and an eclipse of that favourable aspect, in which all bliss doth reside; a case which he that so perfectly understood, could not but infinitely resent: these things with the clearest apprehension Lam. i. 12.

[c] Δι' ἀγνώστων σε παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς Κύριε. Lit. Gr.

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he saw coming on him; and no wonder that our nature started at so ghastly a sight, or that human instinct should dictate that petition, *Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me;* words implying his most real participation of our infirmity; words denoting the height of those sad evils which encompassed him, with his lively and lowly resentment of them; words informing us, how we should entertain God's chastisements, and whence we must seek relief of our pressures, (that we should receive them, not with a scornful neglect or sullen insensibility, but with a meek contrition of soul; that we should entirely depend on God's pleasure for support under them, or a releasement from them;) words which, in conjunction with those following, do shew how instantly we should quash and overrule any insurrection of natural desire against the command or providence of God. We must not take that prayer to signify any purpose in our Lord to shift off his passion, or any wavering in resolution about it; for he could not anywise mean to undo that, which he knew done with God before the world's foundation; he would not unsettle that, which was by his own free undertaking and irreversible decree: he that so often with satisfaction did foretel this event, who with so *earnest desire*[d] longed for its approach: who with that sharpness of indignation did rebuke his friend offering to divert him from it; who did again repress St. Peter's animosity with that serious expostulation, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* who had advisedly laid such trains for its accomplishment, would he decline it? Could that heart, all burning with zeal for God and charity to men, admit the least thought or motion of averseness from drinking that cup, which was the sovereign medicine administered by divine wisdom for the recovery of God's creation? No; had he spake with such intent, legions of angels had flown to his rescue; that word, which framed the worlds, which stilled the tempests, which ejected devils, would immediately have scattered his enemies, and

John xviii. 11.

Matt. xxvi. 53.

[d] Ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐπεθύμησα. Luke xxii. 15.

dashed all their projects against him: wherefore those words did not proceed from intention, but as from instinct, and for instruction; importing, that what our human frailty was apt to suggest, that his divine virtue was more ready to smother; neither did he vent the former, but that he might express the latter. SERM. XXXVI.

He did express it in real effect, immediately with all readiness addressing himself to receive that unsavoury potion; he reached out his hand for it, yielding fair opportunity and advantages to his persecutors; he lifted it up to his mouth, innocently provoking their envy and malice; he drank it off with a most steady calmness and sweet composure of mind, with the silence, the simplicity, the meekness of a lamb carried to the slaughter; no fretful thought rising up, no angry word breaking forth, but a clear patience, enlivened with a warm charity, shining in all his behaviour, and through every circumstance of his passion.

Such in his life, such at his death, was the practice of our Lord; in conformity whereto we also readily should undertake whatever God proposeth, we gladly should accept whatever God offereth, we vigorously should perform whatever God enjoineth, we patiently should undergo whatever God imposeth or inflicteth, how cross soever any duty, any dispensation may prove to our carnal sense or humour.

To do thus, the contemplation of this example may strongly engage us; for if our Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect, can we in modesty desire to have ours? Must we be cockered and pleased in every thing, whenas he was treated so coarsely, and crossed in all things? Can we grutch at any kind of service, or sufferance? Can we think much (for our trial, our exercise, our correction) to bear a little want, a little disgrace, a little pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the sorest adversities?

But farther to enforce these duties, be pleased to cast a glance on two considerations: 1. What the will is to which, 2. Who the willer is to whom, we must submit.

1. What is the will of God? Is it any thing unjust, un-

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worthy, or dishonourable, any thing incommodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult or intolerably grievous, that God requireth of us, to do or bear? No: he willeth nothing from us or to us, which doth not best become us and most behove us; which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solidest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second, for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

1 Thess. iv. 3.

The will of God, saith St. Paul, *is our sanctification*: What is that? what, but that the decays of our frame, and the defacements of God's image within us, should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigour; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despicable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation, which dishonour our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and rack our conscience; that we should be endowed with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven of light, of order, of joy, and peace, dignify our nature, beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind; that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that, in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with angels, and capable of paradise.

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God, saith St. Paul again, *willeth all men to be saved: he willeth not*, saith St. Peter, *that any man should perish.* He saith it himself, yea, he sweareth it, *that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live.* And what is this will? what, but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immoveable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God's favour, and in the light of his blissful presence; that we should be rid of all the evils to which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness and extreme woe? Such is God's will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God (how grim, how rough soever it may seem) doth tend. And do we refuse to comply with that good will; do we set against it a will of our own, affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests, things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the will that would save us, and adhere to a will that would ruin us; a foolish and a senseless will, which, slighting the immense treasures of heaven, the unfading glories of God's kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity, doth catch at specious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles; a shadow of base profit, a smoke of vain honour, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away like *the mirth of fools*, or *the crackling of thorns*, leaving only soot, black and bitter, behind it?

1 Tim. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

Eccles. vii. 6.

But at least ere we do thus, let us consider, whose will it is that requireth our compliance.

It is the will of him, whose will did found the earth, and rear the heaven; whose will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose will is the great law of the world, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in heaven, the blessed spirits adoring it; which swayeth in hell itself, the cursed fiends

Ps. cxlviii. 5. Apoc. iv. 11.

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trembling at it: and shall we alone (we pitiful worms crawling on earth) presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker, who, together with all our other faculties, did create and confer on us the very power of willing: and shall we turn the work of his hands, the gift of his bounty, against him?

It is the will of our Preserver, who, together with all that we are or have, continually doth uphold our very will itself; so that without employing any positive force, merely by letting us fall out of his hand, he can send us and it back to nothing: and shall our will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth; without which it cannot subsist one moment, or move one step forward in action?

It is the will of our sovereign Lord, who, upon various indisputable accounts, hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us: ought we not therefore to say with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seemeth good to him?* Is it not extreme iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to ourselves? Do we not manifestly incur high treason against the King of heaven, by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his sceptre into our hands, and setting our wills in his throne?

1 Sam. iii. 18.

It is the will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding life or death, weal or woe unto us: and what sentence can we expect, what favour can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend, oppose that will, which is the supreme rule of justice and sole fountain of mercy?

It is the will of our Redeemer, who hath bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable captivity under most barbarous enemies, that obeying his will we might command our own, and serving him we might enjoy perfect freedom: and shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that

unhappy state, bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to ourselves the benefit of so great redemption? SERM. XXXVI.

It is the will of our best Friend; who loveth us much better than we do love ourselves; who is concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest interest, and greatly delighteth therein; who, by innumerable experiments, hath demonstrated an excess of kindness to us; who in all his dealings with us purely doth aim at our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness towards us: who never *doth afflict or grieve us* more against our will, than against his own desire; never indeed but when goodness itself calleth for it, and even mercy doth urge thereto; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us: and doth not such a will deserve regard; may it not demand compliance from us? To neglect or infringe it, what is it? is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude? Lam iii.33.

So doth every relation of God recommend his will to us; and each of his attributes doth no less: for,

It is the will of him, who is most holy, or whose will is essential rectitude; how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity?

It is the will of him, who is perfectly just; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous will, and avenge the violation thereof; is it then advisable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation; or to run upon the edge of necessary severity?

It is the will of him, who is infinitely wise; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best for us, what doth most befit our capacities and circumstances; what in the final result will conduce to our greatest advantage and comfort: shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain

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mind before the oracles of his wisdom? shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring will, follow the impulse of our giddy humour?

It is the will of him, who is immensely good and benign; whose will therefore can be no other than good-will to us; who can mean nothing thereby but to derive bounty and mercy on us: can we then fail of doing well, if we put ourselves entirely into his hands? are we not our own greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions?

It is, finally, the will of him, who is uncontrollably powerful; whose will therefore must prevail one way or other; either with our will or against it, either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us: for,

Isa. xlvi. 10. *My counsel*, saith he, *shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* As to his dispensations, we may fret, we may wail, we may bark at them; but we cannot alter or avoid them: sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the sun in his career, than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree; what he layeth on, no hand can remove; what he hath destined, no power can reverse: our anger therefore will be ineffectual, our impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt and augment our grief.

Dan. v. 23. As to his commands, we may *lift up ourselves against them*, we may fight stoutly, we may in a sort prove conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies whereof shall be erected in hell, and stand upon the ruins of our happiness; for, while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under incensed justice: if God cannot fairly procure his will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his will upon us in way of righteous vengeance; if we do not surrender our wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger: he must reign over us, if not as over loyal subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn rebels to our confusion; for this in that case will be our doom,

and the last words God will design to spend upon us, *Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.* SERM. XXXVI. Luke xix. 27.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

SERMON XXXVII.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμὶ, αὐτάρκης εἶναι.

I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.

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IN these words, by the example of an eminent saint, is recommended to us the practice of an excellent duty, or virtue; a practice in itself most worthy, very grateful to God, and immediately of great benefit to ourselves; being indeed necessary towards the comfortable enjoyment of our lives: it is contentedness; the virtue, which, of all other, doth most render this world acceptable, and constituteth a kind of temporal heaven; which he that hath, is thereby *ipso facto* in good measure happy, whatever other things he may seem to want; which he that wanteth, doth, however otherwise he be furnished, become miserable, and carrieth a kind of hell within him: it cannot therefore but well deserve our best study about it, and care to get it; in imitation of St. Paul, who *had learned in whatever state he was, therein to be content.*

Τὸ δ' αὐταρκες τίθεμεν, ὃ μονόμενον αἱρετὸν ποιεῖ τὸν βίον, καὶ μηδενὸς ἐνδεᾶ. *Arist. Eth.* i. 7.

In discoursing upon which words I shall consider two particulars: first, the virtue itself, (contentedness in every state,) the nature of which I shall endeavour to explain; then the way of attaining or producing it, implied by St. Paul in the words, *I have learned.*

Τὸ εὐδαιμονῶν ἀπέχειν δεῖ πάντα ἃ δύ-

I. For explication of the virtue: the word here expressing it is αὐτάρκεια, which signifieth self-sufficiency, or

having enough of oneself; the which is not to be understood absolutely, as if he took himself to be independent in nature, able to subsist of himself, not wanting any support or comfort without himself, (for this is the property and privilege of the great *El-shaddai*, who alone subsisteth of himself, needing toward his being and felicity nothing without himself; this is repugnant to the nature of man, who is a creature essentially dependent for his being and subsistence, indigent of many things for his satisfaction and welfare,) but relatively considering his present state, the circumstances wherein he was, and the capacities he had; which by God's disposal and providence were such, that he could not want more than he had in his possession or reach. He meant not to exclude God, and his providence; but rather supposed that as the ground and cause of his self-sufficiency; according as otherwhere he expresseth it: *Not as if we were sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God:* nor did he intend to exclude the need of other creatures otherwise than as considered without his possession, or beyond his power; but he meaneth only, that he did not desire or lack more than what God had supplied him with; had put into his hand, or had set within his reach; that his will did suit to his state, his desire did not exceed his power.

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λα, πεπλη-
ρωμένην τινι
ἐαυτὸν ἢ
ὀφεῖν δεῖ
προσεῖναι,
μὴδὲ λιμόν.
Arr. iii. 24

2 Cor. iii. 5.

This is the meaning of the word, which the Apostle useth: but for the more full and clear understanding the virtue itself, we shall first consider the object, about which it is conversant; then the several acts, which it requireth, or wherein the exercise thereof consisteth.

1. The object of contentedness is the present state of things, whatever it be, (whether prosperous or adverse, of eminency or meanness, of abundance or scantness,) wherein by divine Providence we are set: τὰ ἐν οἷς ἐσμὲν, *the things in which we are;* that is, our present condition, with all its circumstances: so it may generally be supposed, considering that it is ordinary, and almost natural for men (who have not learned as St. Paul had done, or are not instructed and exercised in the practice of this duty) to be dissatisfied, and disquieted in every state; to be always

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in want of something; to find defects in every fortune; to fancy they may be in better case, and to desire it earnestly: if we estimate things wisely, rich men are more liable to discontent than poor men. It is observable, that prosperity is a peevish thing, and men of highest fortune are apt most easily to resent the smallest things: a little neglect, a slight word, an unpleasing look, doth affect them more than reproaches, blows, wrongs, do those of a mean condition.

Prosperity is a nice and squeamish thing, and it is hard to find any thing able to please men of a full and prosperous state, which being uncapable of bettering in substantial things, they can hardly find matter of solid delight. Whereas a poor estate is easily comforted by the accession of many things which it wanteth: a good meal, a small gift, a little gain, or good success of his labour doth greatly please a poor man with a very solid pleasure: but a rich man hath nothing to please him, but a new toy, a puff of applause, success at a horse-race, at bowls, at hunting; in some petty sport and pastime, which can yield but a very thin and transitory satisfaction to any man not quite brutified and void of sense: whence contentedness hath place, and is needful in every condition, be it in appearance never so prosperous, so plentiful, so pleasant. *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.*

Job xx. 22. Chrys. tom. vii. p. 68.

The formal object thereof may indeed seem to be a condition distasteful to our sense, or cross to our fancy; an adverse or strait condition; a condition of poverty, of disgrace, of any great inconvenience or distress incident to us in this world; but since the most men are absolutely in such a condition, exposed to so many wants and troubles; since many more are needy comparatively, wanting the conveniencies that others enjoy, and which themselves affect; since there are few, who in right estimation are not indigent and poor, that is, who do not desire and fancy themselves to want many things which they have not, (for wealth consisteth not so much in the possession of goods, as in apprehension of freedom from want, and in satisfaction of desires,) since care, trouble, disappointment, satiety,

and discontent following them, do not only haunt cottages, SERM. XXXVII.
and stick to the lowest sort of people, but do even frequent palaces, and pursue men of highest rank; therefore any state may be the object of contentedness; and the duty is of a very general concernment; princes themselves need to learn it; the lessons teaching it, and the arguments persuading it may as well suit the rich and the noble, as the poor and the peasant; so our Apostle himself doth intimate in the words immediately following our text: *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need:* he had the art not only to manage well both conditions, but to be satisfied in either. Phil. iv. 12.

But seeing real adversity, poverty, and disgrace have naturally the strongest influence in disturbing and disordering our minds; that contentedness is plainly most needful in such cases, as the proper support, or medicine of our mind in them; that other states do need it only as they, by fancy or infirmity, do symbolize or conspire with these; therefore unto persons in these states we shall more explicitly apply our directions and persuasions, as to the proper and primary subjects of contentedness; the which by analogy, or parity of reason, may be extended to all others, who, by imaginary wants and distresses, do create displeasure to themselves. So much for the object, or the subject of the virtue.

2. The acts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth, (which are necessary ingredients, or constant symptoms of it,) belong either to the mind and understanding, or to the will and appetite, or to external demeanour and practice; being, 1. right opinions and judgments of mind; 2. fit dispositions and affections of heart; 3. outward good actions and behaviours, in regard to our condition and the events befalling us; the former being as the root and stock, the latter as the fruits and the flowers of the duty: unto which may be reduced the correspondent negations, or absence of bad judgments, affections, and deportments in respect to the same objects.

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(1.) As to our opinions and judgments of things, contentedness requireth, that,

1. We should believe our condition, whatever it be, to be determined by God; and that all events befalling us do proceed from him; at least that he permitteth and ordereth them, according to his judgment and pleasure: Ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶς καὶ γελᾷ καὶ ᾠδύρεται, all, as the Prophet singeth, *both good and evil, proceedeth out of the mouth of the Most High;* that *affliction*, as Job said, *cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;* as a thing arising spontaneously, or sowed by the hand of some creature, but rather descendeth from him, who saith, *I form the light and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.*

Soph. Aj. Lor.

Lam. iii. 38.

Amos iii. 6.

1 Kings xii. 15, 24.

Isa. xlv. 7.

We are apt, when any thing falleth out unpleasant to us, to exclaim against fortune, and to accuse our stars; or to inveigh against the second causes which immediately offend us, ascribing all to their influence; which proceeding doth argue in us a heathenish ignorance and infidelity, or at least much inconsiderateness and impotency of mind; that our judgment is blinded and clouded, or perverted and seduced by ill passions; for that in truth there is not in the world any occurence merely fortuitous, or fatal, (all being guided and wielded by the powerful hand of the all-wise and almighty God,) there is no creature which in its agency doth not depend upon God, as the instrument of his will, or subordinate thereto; wherefore upon every event we should, raising our minds above all other causes, discern and acknowledge God's hand; as David did, when Shimei cursed him; *Let him*, said the good King, *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David;* as Job did, when he was rifled of his goods, *The Lord*, said he, *gave, and the Lord hath taken away;* as our Saviour did, when, in regard to the sore hardships he was designed to undergo, he said, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink?*

Atque Deos, atque astra vocat crudelia mater.

2 Sam. xvi. 10.

Job i. 21.

John xviii. 11.

2. Hence we should always judge every thing which happeneth to be throughly good and fit, worthy (all things considered) to be appointed, or permitted by that

Governor of things; not entertaining any harsh thoughts of God, as if he were not enough wise, just, or benign in ordering us to be afflicted or crossed; but taking all occurrences to be well consistent with all God's holy perfections and attributes [a]. SERM. XXXVII.

We are apt to conceit, that the world is ill ordered, when we do not thrive and prosper therein; that every thing is irregular, which squareth not to the models of our fancy; that things had gone much better, if our designs had found success: but these are vain and perverse conceits; for that certainly is most good, which seemeth good to God [b]; his will is a perfect standard of right and convenience, his eye never aimeth wrong, his hand never faileth to hit the mark of what is best; *All his paths are mercy and truth; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;* so did King Hezekiah rightly judge, when, upon denunciation of a sad doom to his country and posterity, he replied to the prophet, *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken;* so even the Pagan sage discerned, when he thus rebuked a malecontent; *You slave, do you forsooth desire any thing, but what is best? and is not that only best, which seemeth best to God* [c]? Psa. xxv. 10. cxlv. 17. 2 Kings xx. 19.

3. We should even be satisfied in our mind, that, according to God's purpose, all events do tend and conduce to our particular welfare; being not only good to us as members of the world, and in order to more general ends, but serving towards our private benefit and advantage. We may be ready perhaps to confess, that whatever happeneth may be indeed just and fit in some distant and occult respects; but hardly can we be induced to allow, that what we feel offensive to our sense and fancy is

[a] Παραχωρήσωμεν τοίνυν παρακαλῶ τῷ σοφῷ τοῦ παντὸς κυβερνήτῃ, καὶ στέξωμεν τὰ οἰκονομούμενα, ἴστοῖα ποτ' ἂν ᾖ κἂν θυμέρη, κἂν λυπηρὰ, &c. *Theod. Ep.* 136.

[b] Placeat homini quicquid Deo placuit. *Sen. Ep.* 75.

Στέργειν γὰρ χρὴ τὰ παρὰ τῆς ἀῤῥήτου σοφίας πρυτανευόμενα, καὶ ταῦτα πάντως νομίζειν συμφέροντα. *Theod. Ep.* 15.

Οἶδε γὰρ ὡς σοφὸς τὸ συμφέρον, καὶ ὡς ἀγαθὸς τοῦτο ἡμῖν πραγματεύεται. *Id. Ep.* 18.

[c] Ἀνδράποδον, ἄλλο γὰρ θέλεις, ἢ τὸ ἄμεινον; ἄλλο οὖν τι ἄμεινον, ἢ τὸ θεῷ δοκοῦν; *Arr.* xi. 7.

SERM. XXXVII. really good for us, or was meant for our benefit; we cannot easily discern any thing of love or favour in such matters: those sort of aphorisms, in holy Scripture, *Happy is the man, whom God correcteth; As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*, sound strangely, and are huge paradoxes to us; such is our blindness of mind, and dulness of apprehension: but God knoweth with so exact a skilfulness to manage things, that every particular occurrence shall be advantageous to the person, whom it toucheth; and accordingly to each one he dispenseth that which is most suitable to him; whence, as frequently it is necessary for our good that we should be crossed, (for that indeed otherwise we should often much harm, sometimes we should quite undo ourselves,) so it always, when God so ordereth it, is to be deemed most profitable and wholesome for us: we are therefore in reason obliged to take the saddest accidents, and sharpest afflictions, coming upon us by Providence, to be no other than fatherly corrections, or friendly rebukes, designed to render us good and happy; as arguments therefore and instances of especial good-will toward us; conceiving under every dispensation that we do, as it were, hear God speaking to us, as he did to those in the Prophet: *I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

Job v. 17. James i. 12. Rev. iii. 19. Prov. iii. 12.

Jer. xxix. 11.

4. Hence we are to believe, that our present condition (whatever it be to carnal or worldly sense) is in right judgment, all things considered, the best; most proper, most desirable for us; better than we, if it were at our discretion and choice, should put ourselves into: for that God *(the Saviour of all men*, who *desireth that no man should perish;* who *is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works;* who exceedingly tendereth the welfare of his children and subjects) doth ever (here in this life, the time of merit and trial) with a most wise good-will design our best good; and by the most proper methods (such as do best suit our circumstances and capacities) doth aim to draw us unto happiness; and accordingly doth assign a station for us most befitting in order to

1 Tim. ii. 4. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Ps. cxlv. 9.

that great end: we therefore should think ourselves well placed, because we are where God doth set us; that we have enough, because we have what God allotteth us. SERM. XXXVII.

There are other more particular judgments, which contentedness involveth, or which are required toward it; such as these: that nothing originally is due to us, but all cometh purely from divine favour and bounty; that all adversities are justly and deservedly inflicted on us, as the due wages, or natural fruits of our sins; that our happiness dependeth not on any present enjoyments or possessions, but may well subsist without them; that a competency (or so much as sufficeth to maintain our life without intolerable pain) ought to satisfy our desires: but these and the like judgments will come opportunely to be considered as motives to the practice of the duty.

(2.) From such acts of our mind, or intellective part, concerning things incident to us, should proceed the following dispositions of will and affection.

1. We should entertain all occurrences, how grievous soever to us, with entire submission, and resignation of our will to the will of God; wholly acquiescing in his good pleasure; saying in our hearts after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done;* with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* with David, *Behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him;* even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be* [c]; with Epictetus, *I always chiefly will that which cometh to pass; for I account that better which God willeth, than what I will myself; I will adhere as a minister and follower to him, I pursue, I affect, I simply will with him* [d]: looking upon them as sent from God, we should heartily bid them welcome, we should kindly embrace them, we should use them with all fair respect: ἀσπάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα (*to* hug, or kindly to *embrace things incident,*) φιλεῖν τὰ ἀπονεμόμενα (*to love things dispensed by Providence,*) are precepts, 1. Luke xxii. 42. 1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Sam. xv. 26. M Anton. 3. 4. 2. 17. 10. 11. 12.

[c] Εἰ ταύτῃ θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτῃ γενέσθω.

[d] Ἀεὶ μᾶλλον θέλω τὸ γινόμενον· κρεῖττον γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι, ὃ ὁ Θεὸς θέλει, ἢ ἐγὼ· προσκείσομαι διάκονος καὶ ἀκόλουθος ἐκείνῳ, συνορμῶ, ὁρίγομαι, ἁπλῶς συνθέλω. Arr. iii. 7.

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which even as dictated by natural reason philosophers do much inculcate.

This excludeth all rebellious insurrection, and swellings of mind against Providence, such as argue that we dislike God's government; that, were we able, we should struggle with God's will; that we gladly would shake off his yoke; all such ill resentment and repining at our lot, which maketh God's hand grievous, and his yoke uneasy to us; such affections as the Wise Man toucheth, when he saith, *The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.*

Prov. xix. 3.

2. We should bear all things with steady calmness and composedness of mind, suppressing or quelling those tumults, those storms, those excesses of passion, which the sense of things disgustful is apt to excite; such as are immoderate grief, fierce anger, irksome despair, and the like. No adversity should so ruffle our minds, as to defeat or pervert the use of our reason, so as to hinder us from perceiving, or performing what becometh us, so as to engage us into any irregular or unseemly behaviour.

Let no man be moved by these afflictions; μηδένα σαίνεσθαι (i. e. θορυβεῖσθαι. *Curys.*

1 Thess. iii. 3.

3. We should indeed bear the worst events with an εὐθυμία, that is, with a sweet and cheerful disposition of mind, so as not to be put out of humour; not to be dejected or quite discouraged by them [e], not to fall into that *heaviness*, which, as the Wise Man saith, *maketh the heart of man to stoop;* but rather finding delight and complacence in them, as considering whence they come, whither they aim and tend: such was the disposition and demeanour of the Apostles and primitive good Christians in the midst of their most grievous adversities and sufferings [f]; *they rejoiced*, &c. they did *take joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, they did *account it all joy when they fell into divers tribulations;* they were, ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, *as grieved, but always rejoicing;* their state was grievous, but their heart was constantly cheerful, such a constant

Prov. xii. 22.

Acts v. 41. Heb. x. 34. James i. 2. 2Cor. vi. 10.

[e] Ἵνα κατὰ κόσμον λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται. 2 Cor. vii. 10.

[f] Εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

Εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν, καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς. Col. i. 11.

frame of mind we should maintain, so continually prepared we should be against all contingencies, that nothing should happen amiss to us, so as deeply to affect us, or to unsettle us in our humour; that every thing from God's hand should be acceptable; that no sadness may seize on us, at least that we do not indulge or cherish it; that in nowise we suffer any regret to quench that spiritual comfort and joy in God, which *becometh the upright*, as the Psalmist saith, and which we are so often enjoined perpetually to maintain, as in all cases, so particularly under afflictions and trials. We cannot indeed hardly be content, if we are not cheerful; for it is hard to be altogether on the suffering and bearing hand, without any pleasure: the mind can hardly stand in a poise, so as neither to sorrow or joy; we cannot digest adversity, if we do not relish it; we shall not submit to it as his will, if we do not take it for an argument of his love: εὐδοκῶ, *I*, saith St. Paul, *have a liking or pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Psa. xxxiii. 1. xcvii. 12. Phil. iv. 4. iii. 1. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 13. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

4. We should with faith and hope rely and wait on God for the removal, or easement of our afflictions; or, however, we should confide in him for grace, and strength to support them well: as our Saviour did, when he prayed, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup;* as they did in the Prophet, who said, *In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited on thee;* according to that rule in the Lamentations, *It is good that a man should both hope, and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord;* and those precepts in the Psalms, *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*

Luke xxii. 42. Isa. xxvi. 8. xxxiii. 2. Lam. iii. 26. Psa. xxxvii. 7. xxvii. 14. Psal. xl. 1. xxxiii. 20. lxii. 1. xxv. 3. lxix. 6. xvi. 8. Psa. xlii. 5.

We should in any case be ready with the holy Psalmist thus to interrogate and sustain ourselves: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou so disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance.*

Remembering, and considering, that (as we are expressly taught in Scripture, and as all our religion doth clearly

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suppose) *God knoweth to rescue the godly out of tribulation;* (he knoweth the proper season, when it is fit to do it;) that *he is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it:* reflecting, I say, on these certain points of Christian truth, we should never *sorrow as those who are without hope;* we should never despair of a good riddance from our adversity, when it shall be seasonable or beneficial for us; we should always be assured of a comfortable support under it, which is usually better than deliverance from it; our minds should never sink into despondency, or disconsolateness: that this is practicable in the worst case, we have conspicuous instances to assure us; it hath been the practice of most illustrious and excellent persons, particularly of the holy Apostles; never was any condition, in outward respects and appearance, more forlorn and dismal than was theirs; yet it nowise bereaved them of hope, or courage: *We*, they could say, *are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

2 Pet. ii. 3. 1 Pet. v. 7. Matt. vi. 25. 1 Cor. x. 13. 1 Thess. iv. 13. Isa. xl. 31. Mic. vii. 7. 2 Cor. iv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 11.

5. We should indeed not so much as faint or languish in our minds upon any such occasion; no adversity should impair the forces of our reason or our spirit; should enervate our courage, or slacken our industry; should render us sick, or weak in heart; for, *If*, saith the Wise Man, *thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small*, (it is the sign of an infirm mind,) and μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *not to falter* or decay, μὴ ἐκλύεσθαι, *not to be dissolved*, or disjointed, *in our souls*, (as the body is in scorbutic distempers,) are rules prescribed to us in such cases: we do then indeed need a firm and robust constitution of soul; we should then bear up most resolutely and stoutly: the encouragement of Moses to the people, entering upon battle, may well be accommodated to us, in regard to our conflict with adversities; *Let not your hearts faint, fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them.*

Prov. xxiv. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 16. Rev. ii. 3. 2 Thess. iii. 13. Gal. vi. 9. Heb. xii. 3. —nunc animis opus est, nunc pectore firmo. Deut. xx. 3.

6. We should not be weary of our condition, or have irksome longings for alteration; but, with a quiet indiffer-

ency and willingness of mind, lie under it during God's pleasure; according to the Wise Man's advice; *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction;* and that of the Apostle, enforced by our Lord's example; *Consider him, that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.* We should not think God slow, or his time long and tedious, as if he were forgetful of us, or backward to succour us; as the Psalmist was inclined to do, when in the day of trouble he brake forth into these conceits and expressions: *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* Thus he in a sad mood was apt to think and speak; but, recollecting himself, he perceived it was his error, and confessed it was his fault thus to imagine; *I said, it was mine infirmity;* and it will be ours likewise, if we entertain such conceptions and resentments: we should with the same mind endure our present state, as we do pass through a hard winter, or a time of foul weather, taking it for seasonable and fit, because the wise Author of nature hath so appointed and ordered it.

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Prov. iii. 11.

Heb. xii. 3.

Psal. lxxvii. 7, 10.

7. We should by adverse accidents be rendered lowly in our own eyes, and sober in our conceits of ourselves; meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirit; sensible of our unworthiness and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury, and misery, of our actual offences and miscarriages; deeply affected in regard to the awful majesty and power, to the perfect holiness and strict justice of God; they should quell our haughty stomach, they should supple our stiff wilfulness, they should soften our hard hearts, they should mitigate our peevish humours: to effect these things is usually the design of such accidents, and it is ever the best fruit of them: this is that which St. Peter adviseth to, when he saith, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;* which God approveth, and encouageth with a gracious promise, when he saith, *To this man will I look, even to him, that is of a poor and contrite*

1 Pet. v. 6.

Isa. lxvi. 2.

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spirit, and trembleth at my word: this disposition is an inseparable adherent to contentedness; he that hath not his spirit thus broken, or mollified, will hardly be content in any state; he that is haughty in conceit, and sturdy in humour, will every where find that which will cross and disturb him.

8. It is required that we should, notwithstanding any meanness, any hardness of our condition, be meekly and kindly affected toward others, being satisfied and pleased with their more prosperous state[g]. We should not be angry with the world, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; we should not be sullen or peevish toward any man, because his fortune is better than ours; we should not repine or grudge at the good success of any of our brethren, becouse we want the like ourselves; *we should rather rejoice with those that rejoice;* innocently filching some pleasure from them, or borrowing some satisfaction from their enjoyments. It is *human* thus to do, because of the natural cognation and friendship of men; it is more especially *Christian*, because of our spiritual consanguinity; by virtue whereof we are so knit together, and made *members each to other*, that *if*, as St. Paul telleth us, *one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honoured, all the members should rejoice with it:* we can hardly be content without thus appropriating the goods, and sharing in the delights of others; he can never be content, who looketh *with an evil eye* upon other men's prosperity; he cannot do well himself who loveth not to see his neighbour do well; numberless occasions will happen to discompose and vex him.

Rom. xii. 15.

Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

Adversity impatiently borne is apt to sour our spirits, and render us froward toward men; especially when it proceedeth from the unkindness, ingratitude, or treachery of friends, or of persons obliged to us for our good-will, or for benefits done to them: but nothing should render us

[g] Ita plerumque contingit, ut dum aliquos fratres nostros in quantulacunque requie constitutos in mediis nostris anxietatibus cogitamus, non parva ex parte recreemur, tanquam et nos ideo ipsi quietius tranquilliusque vivamus. *Aug. Ep.* 144.

unkindly disposed toward the world, nothing should extinguish charity in us toward any man; so plain reason teacheth us, so great examples enforce: Moses did not lose his affection towards his countrymen, because he was by one of them threatened away into banishment and vagrancy; the Apostles became not dissaffected to the world, because it misused and persecuted them; our Lord did continue most earnestly to desire, and laboriously to endeavour the good of those who most despitefully used him: like theirs, in all cases, should our disposition be; we should ever observe the Psalmist's advice; *Cease from anger, forsake wrath, fret not thyself in anywise to do evil.* Psal. xxxvii. 8. SERM. XXXVII.

Again,

9. Contentedness doth imply a freedom from all solicitude and anxiety of mind, in reference to provision for our needs, and conveniences of life; according to those rules and precepts of *casting our burthen and care upon the Lord*, of *being careful for nothing, but commending our affairs to God's ordering*; according to that most comfortable precept of our Lord, *Take no care, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, How shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye want all these things.* If we do not thus, it is hardly possible that we should be content; if we do not depend upon Providence, we cannot scape being often distracted with care, and perplexed with fear; we cannot cheerfully hope for any thing we need, nor be quietly secure of any thing we possess. 1 Pet. v. 7. Psal. xxxvii. 5. lv. 23. Phil. iv. 6. Matt. vi. 31.

10. It requireth also that we should curb our desires, and confine them in the narrowest bounds we can; so as not to affect more in quantity, or better in quality, than our nature and state do require[h]: if we must have superfluities, if we can only relish dainties, we shall never be pleased; for as nature hath limits, and is content with little; as there is no state in this world, the exigencies

[h] Ἴδιξα πολυτελείας ἀπολαύσιν οἱ ἴκιξα ταύτης δεόμενοι. *Epic. ad Mænac.* Ventre nihil novi frugalius. *Juv. Sat.* v.

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whereof may not be anwered with a competence; so curiosity is an infinite and insatiable thing: *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich;* that is, he which is curious and nice in his desires, will never have enough [i]: the rule, which, according to St. Paul, should regulate our desires, is this; *Having food and raiment, let us with them be satisfied:* if this will satisfy us, we may easily obtain satisfaction [k]: a moderate industry, with God's blessing, will procure so much; God hath promised to bestow it; if this will not suffice, there is no sure way of getting or keeping more: as God is nowise obliged to provide us superfluities, or concerned to relieve our extravagant longings; so we may fear, that Providence will be ready to cross us in our cares and endeavours tending to those purposes; so that we shall be disappointed in the procurement, or disturbed in the fruition of such needless things. However, he that is most scant in his desires, is likely to be most content in his mind: *He*, as Socrates said, *is nearest the gods* (who need nothing) *that needeth fewest things.*

Prov. xxi. 17.

1 Tim. vi. 8.

Ὁ ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος, ἐγγίστα θεῶν. *Socr. in Xenoph. Apomn.* iii.

In fine, contentedness doth import, that whatever our condition is, our minds and affections should be modelled and squared just according to it; so that our inclinations be compliant, our desires be congruous thereto, so that easily we can comport with the inconveniencies, can relish the comforts, can improve the advantages sticking thereto; otherwise, like an ill-made garment, it will sit unhandsome upon us, and be troublesome to us. It is not usually our condition itself, but the unsuitableness thereof to our disposition and desires, (which soureth all its sweets, and rendereth its advantages fruitless,) that createth discontent; for, although it be very mean, others bear the same cheerfully; many would be glad thereof: if therefore we will be content, we must bend our inclinations, and adapt our desire to a correspondence with our state.

[i] Αἱ κατὰ φύσιν ὀρέξεις αὐταρκείᾳ περιορίζεται. *Cl. Alex. Pæd.* ii. 1.

[k] Si ad naturam vives nunquam eris pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam dives. *Epic. Sen. Ep.* 6.

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If we are rich, we should get a large and bountiful heart, otherwise our wealth will hang loose about us; the care and trouble in keeping it, the suspicion and fear of losing it, the desire of amplifying it, the unwillingness to spend or use it, will bereave us of all true satisfaction therein, and render it no less unsavoury to us, than unprofitable to others.

If we are poor, we should have a frugal, provident, industrious mind, sparing in desires, free from curiosity, willing to take pains, able to digest hardships; otherwise the straitness of our condition will pinch and gall us.

Are we high in dignity or reputation? we then need a mind well ballasted with sober thoughts, otherwise the wind of vanity will drive us into absurd behaviours, thence will dash us upon disappointments, and consequently will plunge us into vexation and discontent.

Are we mean and low? we need a meek and lowly, a calm and steady spirit; not affecting little respects, or resenting the want of them; apt to pass over or to bear quietly petty affronts and neglects; not apt to be moved by words signifying contempt or disdain; else (being fretted with such things, which in this ill-natured and hard-hearted world we may be sure often to meet with) we shall be uneasy in our minds, and impatiently wish a change of our state.

These and the like dispositions and affections of soul this duty containeth, or requireth; from hence, should arise a correspondent external demeanour, and such actions as these which follow:

1. We should restrain our tongues from all unseemly and unsavoury expressions, implying dissatisfaction in God's proceedings, or displeasure at his providence; arguing desperation or distrust in God; such as were those of the discontented and impatient Israelites; *They*, saith the Psalmist, *spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?* Such as they used, of whom the Prophet saith, *When they shall* Psal. lxxviii. 19. Numb. xxi. 5. Isa. iii. 21.

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be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King and their God; as those in the Apocalypse, who, being afflicted with deserved judgments, *did blaspheme the name of God, which had power over those plagues—blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores.* Into such profane enormities of language is discontent apt to break forth, questioning the power of God, or his willingness to succour us; venting wrath and displeasure toward him; charging him foolishly with injustice, or with unkindness, or with negligence, or with impotency; the abstaining from which behaviour, under the sense of his bitter calamities, is a great commendation of Job; *In all this,* it is said, *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly*[l].

Rev. xvi. 9, 11, 21.

2. We should indeed forbear any the least complaint or murmuring, in regard to the dispensations of Providence; or in dissatisfaction in the state allotted us: St. Jude saith, that God in the last day *will come, to execute judgment, and to convince men of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him; these,* subjoineth he, *are* γογγυσαὶ μεμψίμοιροι, *murmurers, that complain of their lot;* which signifieth the heinousness and extreme dangerousness of this practice. *Wherefore doth the living man complain?* is the Prophet's question, implying it to be an unreasonable and blameable practice. Wherefore the advice of David is good; to suppress all complaint, to be still and silent in such cases; *Be still,* saith he, *and know that I am God;* and, *Be silent to the Lord;* the which precepts his practice may seem well to interpret and back; *I was,* saith he, *dumb; I opened not my mouth, because it was my doing*[m]: and accordingly Job, *Behold,* (said he, after having considered all the reasons he could imagine of God's proceedings,) *I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand*

Jude 15, 16.

Lam. iii. 39.

Psal. xlvi. 10. iv. 4. xxxvii. 7. Ps. xxxix. 9.

Job xl. 4.

[l] Job. i. 22. Οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἀφροσύνην τῷ Θεῷ.
Ἀλλ' ἔχε σιγῇ μῦθον, ἐπίτρεψον δὲ θεοῖσι. *Hom. Od.* T.

[m] ——— σιωπῇ
Πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλὰ βίας ὑποδὶγμενος ἀνδρῶν. *Od.* E.

upon my mouth. And thus our Saviour, when *he was oppressed and afflicted, opened not his mouth.* SERM. XXXVII. Isa. liii. 7.

3. Yea it is our duty, in these cases, to spend our breath in declaring our satisfaction in God's dealing with us[n]; acknowledging his wisdom, justice, and goodness therein; blessing and praising him for all that hath befallen us; each of us confessing after David, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;* imitating Job, who, upon the loss of all his goods, did say no more than this: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* Psal. cxix. 75. Job i. 21.

4. We should abstain from all irregular, unlawful, and unworthy courses toward the removal or remedy of our needs, or crosses, choosing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relax ourselves; rather bearing patiently than violently, like those in the Prophet, *breaking our yoke, and bursting our minds. Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.* We should rather continue poor, than by cozenage or rapine endeavour to raise our fortune; we should rather lie under disgrace and contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances strive to acquire the respect and favour of men; we should rather willingly rest in the lowest condition, than do as those, who, by disturbing the world, by fomenting disorders and factions, by supplanting their neighbour's welfare, by venting slanders and detractions, do labour to amplify their estate: we should rather endure any inconvenience or distress, than have recourse to ways of evading them disallowed by God; doing as the Jews did, who in their straits, against the declared pleasure of God, *set their faces toward Egypt, strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, trusted in the staff of that broken reed.* In neglect or diffidence toward God, to embrace such aids, is, as God in the Prophet declareth, a very blam- Jer. v. 5. Job xxxvi. 21. Jer. xlii. 15. ii. 18, 13. Isa. xxx. 2. xxxvi. 6. xxxi. 1. Ezek. xvii. 15.

[n] Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν. Οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι τοῦτο ἐπιλέγων ἀεὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι μοι τοῖς συμβαίνουσι. *Chrys. ad Olymp.* Ep. ii.

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able and mischievous folly: *Ephraim*, saith he, *is like a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria—Woe unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me.* We may consider how St. Paul reproveth the Corinthians for seeking a redress of wrong, scandalous and dishonourable to the Church; *Now, therefore, it is utterly a fault among you, that ye go to law one with another; Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* Even to right ourselves in a way whereby any dishonour may come to God, or damage to his Church, is not to be approved; and better it is, in the Apostle's judgment, to bear any injury or damage ourselves: *Better it is*, saith St. Peter, *if the will of God be so, that we suffer for well-doing, than to do ill.* And, *Let them who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator*, is another wholesome advice of that great Apostle.

Hos. vii. 11, 13.

1 Cor. vi. 7.

1 Pet. iii. 17. iv. 19.

5. We should, notwithstanding any adversity, proceed in our affairs (such as God requireth, or reason putteth us upon) with alacrity, courage, and industry; performing however, so far as our circumstances do permit, what is good and fit for us: no disappointment or cross, no straits or grievances of condition should render us listless, or lazy, but rather it should quicken and inflame our activity; this being a good way to divert us from the sense of our misfortunes, and to comfort us under their pressure; as also the readiest way to remove or to abate them, τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέσθαι, *to order the present well*, whatever it be[o]; to make the best of a bad matter, to march forward whither reason calls, how difficultly soever, or slowly it be, in a rough or dirty way; not to yield to difficulties, but resolutely to encounter them, to struggle lustily with them, to endeavour with all our might to surmount them[p]; are acts worthy of a manly reason and courage: to direct ill ac-

[o] Κερδαντέον τὸ παρὸν σὺν εὐλογιστίᾳ. *Ant.* iv. 26. vi. 2.
Τὸ παρὸν ἀπευθύνειν πρὸς ὁσιότητα καὶ δικαιοσύνην. *Id.* xii. 1.

[p] Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.

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cidents to good ends, and improve them to honest uses, is the work of a noble virtue. If a bad game be dealt us, we should not presently throw up, but play it out so well as we can; so perhaps we may save somewhat, we shall at least be busy till a better come. *Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good*, is the Psalmist's advice in such a case; and it is a practice necessary to the procuring and maintaining content; if we be not otherwise well employed, we shall be apt, in our thoughts, to melancholize, and dote upon our mischances, the sense of them will fasten upon our spirits, and gnaw our hearts.

Psa. xxxvii. 3.

6. We should behave ourselves fairly and kindly toward the instruments and abettors of our adversity; toward those who brought us into it, and those who detain us under it, by keeping off relief, and those who forbear to afford the succour we might expect; forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge or enmity toward them; but rather, even upon that score, bearing good-will, and expressing kindness toward them; not only as to our brethren, whom, according to the general law of charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, and the instruments of his pleasure toward us; considering, that by maligning or molesting them, we do express ill resentments of God's dealing with us, and, in effect, through their sides, do wound his Providence: thus did the good king behave himself toward Shimei, when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by him; not suffering (upon this account, because he was God's instrument of afflicting himself) that any harm should be done unto him: thus the holy Apostles *being reviled, did bless; being defamed, did entreat:* thus our Lord demeaned himself toward his spiteful adversaries; who, *when he was reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but committed it to him that judgeth righteously.* In all these cases we should at least observe the rules and advices of the Wise Man: *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me, I will render to the man according to his work; say thou not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.*

2 Sam. xvi. 7.

1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. 1 Pet. ii. 23. iii. 9.

Prov. xxiv. 29. xx. 22.

SERM. XXXVII. Discontent usually consisteth not so much in displeasure for the things we suffer, as at the persons who bring them on us, or who do not help to rid us from them; it is their presumed injury or discourtesy which we do fret at: such passions therefore toward men being discarded, our evils presently will become supportable, and content easily will ensue. As men in any sickness or pain, if their friends are about them, affording comfort or assistance, do not seem to feel any thing, and forbear complaining; so, if the world about us doth please us, if we bear no disaffection or grudge toward any person in view, our adversity will appear less grievous, it will indeed commonly be scarce sensible to us.

In these and such like acts the duty and virtue of contentedness doth especially reside; or it is employed and exercised by them: and so much may suffice for the explication of its nature. I come now to consider the way of attaining it, intimated by St. Paul here, when he saith, *I have learned.*

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OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

I have learned, &c.

THESE words signify how contentedness may be attained, or how it is produced: it is not an endowment innate to us; it doth not arrive by chance into us; it is not to be purchased by any price; it springeth not up of itself, nor ariseth from the quality of any state; but it is a product of discipline; *I have learned.*

It is a question debated in Plato, εἰ διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετή, *whether virtue be to be learned;* St. Paul plainly resolveth it in this case by his own experience and testimony. What Seneca saith in general of virtue (*Nature giveth not virtue; it is an art to become good* [a]) is most true of this virtue; it is an art, with which we are not born, no more than with any other art or science; the which, as other arts cannot be acquired without studious application of mind, and industrious exercise: no art indeed requireth more hard study and pain toward the acquiry of it, there being so many difficulties, so many obstacles in the way thereto: we have no great capacity, no towardly disposition to learn it; we must, in doing it, deny our carnal sense, we must settle our wild fancy, and suppress fond conceits; we must bend our stiff and stubborn inclinations;

[a] Non dat natura virtutem, ars est bonum fieri. *Sen. Ep.* 89.

Virtus etiamsi quosdam impetus ex natura sumit, tamen perficienda doctrina est. *Quinctil.* xii. 2.

SERM. XXXVIII. we must repress and restrain wanton desire; we must allay and still tumultuous passions; we must cross our humour and curb our temper: which to do is a hard chapter to learn; much consideration, much practice, much contention and diligence are required thereto.

Hence it is an art which we may observe few do much study; and of the students therein few are great proficients; so that *Qui fit, Mecœnas?* Horace's question, *How comes it to pass that nobody liveth content with the lot assigned by God?* wanted not sufficient ground.

However, it is not, like the quadrature of the circle, or the philosopher's stone, an art impossible to be learned, and which will baffle all study: there are examples, which shew it to be obtainable; there are rules and precepts, by observing which we may arrive to it.

And it is certainly a most excellent piece of learning; most deserving our earnest study: no other science will yield so great satisfaction, or good use; all other sciences, in comparison thereto, are dry and fruitless curiosities; for were we masters of all other knowledge, yet wanted the skill of being content, we should not be wise or happy; happiness and discontent are ἀσύμφατα, (things incompatible.)

But how then may this skill be learned? I answer, chiefly (divine grace concurring) by these three ways. 1. By understanding the rules and precepts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth. 2. By diligent exercise, or application of those rules to practice; whereby the habit will be produced. 3. By seriously considering, and impressing upon our minds those rational inducements (suggested by the nature and reason of things) which are apt to persuade the practice thereof. The *first* way I have already endeavoured to declare; the *second* wholly dependeth upon the will and endeavour of the learner; the *third* I shall now insist upon, propounding some rational considerations, apt, by God's help, to persuade contentedness, and serving to cure the malady of discontent. They may be drawn from several heads; from God, from ourselves, from our particular condition

or state; from the world, or general state of men here; from the particular state of other men in comparison to ours; from the nature and consequences of the duty itself; every thing about us, well examined and pondered, will minister somewhat inducing and assisting thereto. SERM. XXXVIII.

I. In regard to God we may consider, that equity doth exact, and gratitude requireth, and all reason dictateth, that we should be content; or that, in being discontented, we behave ourselves very unbeseemingly and unworthily, are very unjust, very ingrateful, and very foolish toward him. 1 Sam. iii. 18.

1. Equity doth exact this duty of us, and in performing it we act justly toward God, both admitting his due right, and acknowledging his good exercise thereof; that saying in the Gospel, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* is a most evident maxim of equity; it is therefore the natural right and prerogative of God, as the Creator and Preserver, and consequently the absolute Lord, Owner, and Governor of all things, to assign his station, and allot his portion to every person, as he judgeth good and convenient; it is most just that inviolably he should enjoy this right: he being also infinitely wise and good, it is likewise most just to acknowledge that he doth perfectly well manage this right. Now by contentful submission to God's disposal of things, we do worthily express our due regard to both these, avowing his right, and approving his exercise thereof; but by discontent and regret at what happeneth, we do in effect injure God in both those respects, disavowing his right, and impeaching his management. We do thereby so renounce his right, as (so far as conceit and wish do reach) to invade it, and usurp it to ourselves; signifying, that in our opinion things ought not to be ordered according to his judgment and pleasure, but after our fancy and humour; we claim to ourselves the privilege of controlling his estate, and dispensing his goods, so as to be our own carvers, and to assume to ourselves so much as we think good; we imply, that, if we were able, we would extort the power Matt. xx. 15.

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out of his hands, and manage it ourselves, modelling the world according to our conceits and desires.

Multos inveni æquos adversus homines, adversus Deos neminem. *Sen. Ep.* 93.

We do also, (since we cannot but perceive the other attempt of dispossessing God to be frivolous and fruitless,) in effect, charge God with misdemeanour, with iniquity, or infirmity in his distribution and disposal of things; intimating, that in our opinion he doth not order them so justly or so wisely as might be, (not so well as we in our wisdom and justice should order them;) for did we conceive them managed for the best, we could not but judge it most unreasonable to be aggrieved, or to complain: so heinously insolent and unjust are we in being discontent. In earnest, which is most equal, that God should have his will, or we? For shame we shall say, God: why then do we not contentedly let him have it?

It is indeed, if we consider it, the highest piece of injustice that we can be guilty of, exceeding that which we commit in any other sort of disobedience. For as in any state seditious mutining is the greatest crime, as most directly violating the majesty, and subverting the authority of the prince; so in the world, none may be supposed more to offend and wrong its sovereign Governor, than such malecontents, who dislike and blame his proceedings: even a Heathen could teach us, that it is our duty to *subject our mind to him that administereth all things, as good citizens to the law of the commonwealth* [b]; if we do not, we are rebellious and seditious, which is the highest pitch of injustice toward our most gracious Sovereign.

1 John v. 10.

Again, there can be no greater injury or affront offered to God, than to *give him the lie*, by questioning his veracity or fidelity; this discontent plainly doth involve: for God hath expressly declared himself ready upon all occasions to do us good; he hath promised to *care for us*, and *never to forsake us*, or leave us destitute; which word of his if we did not distrust, and take him to be unfaithful, we could not be discontent: as no man is dis-

Matt. vi. 25, 36. Heb. xiii. 5.

[b] Τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην ὑποτάσσειν τῷ διοικοῦντι τὰ ὅλα, καθάπερ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ πολῖται τῷ νόμῳ τῆς πόλεως. *Arr.* i. 12.

pleased with his condition, or suspicious of want, who knoweth that he hath abundant supply of all he can need in a sure place; that he hath a person most able, most willing, most faithful, engaged to succour him; so, did we believe God to be true, who hath promised to help us, we could not be discontented for fear of any want. SERM. XXXVIII.

We must at least, in so doing, suspect God to be deficient in goodness toward us, or unwilling to help us; or we must apprehend him impotent, and unable to perform what he would, and what he hath promised for us, (like those infidels, who said, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?*) which conceits of God are also very unworthy and injurious to him. Ps. lxxviii. 19.

2. Gratitude requireth of us this duty: for we having no right or title to any thing; all that we have coming from God's pure bounty; he having upon us all (whatever our condition comparatively is, or may seem to us) freely conferred many great benefits, common to all men among us, (our being, life, reason, capacity of eternal happiness, manifold spiritual blessings, incomparably precious and excellent,) we in all reason should be thankful for these, without craving more, or complaining for the want of other things [c]. Whereas also all events, how cross soever to our sensual conceits or appetites, are by God designed and dispensed for our good, gratitude requireth that we should thank God for them, and not murmur against them.

Surely if, instead of rendering God thanks for all the excellent gifts which he most liberally (without any previous obligation to us, or desert of ours) hath bestowed on us, and continueth to bestow, we fret, and quarrel, that he doth not in smaller matters seem to cocker us, we are extremely ingrateful and disingenuous toward him. If any great person here should freely bestow on us gifts of

[c] Iniquus est qui muneris sui arbitrium danti non relinquit, avidus qui non lucri loco habet quod accepit, sed damni quod reddidit, &c. *Sen. ad Polyb.* 29.

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huge value, (high preferment or much wealth,) but with good reason, as we might presume, should withhold from us some trifle, that we fancy or dote on, should we not be very unworthy, if we should take it ill and be angry with him for that cause? The case is plainly the same: God hath in the frankest manner bestowed on us innumerable and inestimable goods, in comparison whereto any comfort or convenience of our state here is very trivial and despicable: are we not therefore very ingrateful, if we heinously resent the want of any such things; if, upon any such account, we disgust his Providence? Do we not deal, beyond all expression, unworthily with God, in so much undervaluing the goods which he hath given us, or doth offer us, and hath put in our reach? He hath made us capable of the greatest goods imaginable, and faithfully upon easy terms proffereth them to us; he even tendereth himself (himself, the immense and all comprehending good, the fountain of all joy and bliss) to be fully enjoyed by us: his wisdom he offereth to instruct and guide us; his power, to protect and guard us; his fulness, to supply us; his goodness, to comfort us; he offereth his love and favour to us, in having which we virtually and in effect have all things; becoming thereby, in the highest degree, rich and honourable and happy: and is it not then outrageous unworthiness to prize any other thing (any petty accommodation of this transitory life, any pitiful toy here) so much, as to be displeased for the want thereof; as if all this were not enough to satisfy our needs, or satiate our desires; as if, notwithstanding all these immense effusions (yea as it were profusions) of bounty upon us, we could be indigent or unhappy? *Shall we,* to use that holy and most ingenuous consideration of Job, *receive so much good from the bountiful hand of God, and shall we not contentedly receive or bear so small evils from him?* Evils indeed in name and to gross sense, but not so in reality, not so in effect, at least not so in God's design [d];

Job ii. 10.

[d] Εὐχαριστῶ σοι πάτερ, ὦ ποιητὰ τῶν σῶν ἀνθρώπων—ὅτι ἄκοντας ἡμᾶς ἐν ποιεῖς, &c. said Philagrius in a grievous disease. *Naz. Ep.* 66.

but rather things very convenient and profitable for us; which is another aggravation of our ingratitude; for, SERM. XXXVIII.

Are we not also very ungrateful in misapprehending and disliking that which God doeth out of very gracious intentions toward us; in loathing his fatherly and friendly dispensations; the fatherly chastisements and friendly disciplines, which he unwillingly is forced (is, I say, forced by his own great love and by our pressing needs) to inflict or impose upon us[e]? Surely our ill opinions of, or *despising*, as the Wise Man calleth it, these unpleasant blessings is no small fault; neither will our not discerning (out of affected dulness and stupid pravity not discerning) the wisdom of God's methods, and the wholesomeness of the means he useth to better us, excuse us from foul ingratitude. Prov. iii. 11.

3. Again, upon many accounts, reason farther dictateth in respect to God, that we should be content: because it is most reasonable to acquiesce in God's choice of our state, he being infinitely more wise than we, and infinitely better understanding what is good for us than we can do; because he is well affected to us, and more truly loveth us than we do ourselves; because he hath a just right, and irresistible power to dispose of us, the which (whatever we can do, however we resent it) he will effectually make use of; whence it is extremely foolish to be discontent: foolish it is to be dissatisfied with the results of his wisdom, adhering to our vain apprehensions; foolish to distrust his goodness in compliance with our fond self-love: foolish to contest his unquestionable right and uncontrollable power, having nothing but mere impotency to oppose against them; no less than downright madness it is to fret and fume at that which we can nowise help, to bark at that which lodgeth in heaven so far high above us, to solicit deaf necessity with our ineffectual wailings; for if we think that our displeasure will affect God, that our complaints will incline him to alter our condition, or comply with our wishes, we do conceit vainly, and without any ground;

Εὐχεταιρεὶς τῷ θεῷ ἁπλῶς τἀγαθά διδόναι, ὡς τῷ θεῷ κάλλιστα εἰδότας ὁποῖα ἀγαθά ἐστι. *Xenoph. de Socr.*

Charior est illis homo quam sibi.

Ἐάν τε κλαίῃς, ἄν τε μὴ, πείσεται. *Philem.*

[e] Ἐπειδὰν τὸ μὴ πάσχειν οὐκ ἔχω, τοῦτό γε τῷ πάσχειν παρακινδυνεύω, τὸ φέρειν, καὶ τὸ εὐχαριστεῖν. *Naz. de sc. Ep.* 63.

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Οὐ γάρ τις πρήξις πέλεται κρυεροῖο γόοιο. *Il.* Ω. Σὺ δ' εἶκ' ἀνάγκῃ. καὶ θεοῖσι μὴ μάχου. *Eurip.*

sooner may we, by our imagination, stop the tides of the sea, or turn the streams of rivers backward: sooner, by our cries, may we stay the sun, and change all the courses of the stars, than by our passionate resentments or moanful clamours we can check the current of affairs, or alter that state of things, which is by God's high decree established: discontended behaviour will rather fasten our condition, or remove it into a worse place; as it highly doth offend God, and increaseth our guilt, so it moveth God to continue, and to augment our evils. Thus lifting up our eyes to heaven, and considering the reference our disposition and demeanour hath to God, will induce us to bear our case contentedly.

Lam. iii. 39. II. Again, reflecting upon ourselves, we may observe much reason to be content with our state; in whatever capacity we look upon ourselves, it in reason becometh us, we in duty are obliged to be so.

As men and creatures, we naturally are indigent and impotent; we have no just claim to any thing, nor any possession maintainable by our power; all that we have, or can have, cometh from most pure courtesy and bounty; wherefore how little soever is allowed us, we have no wrong done us, nor can we justly complain thereat: such beggars as we are must not pretend to be choosers: if any thing be given us, we may be glad, we should be thankful. It is for those who have a right and a power to maintain it, to resent and expostulate, if their due be witheld; but for us, that never had any thing which we could call our own; that have no power to get or keep any thing; for us, that came into the world naked and defenceless, that live here in continual, absolute, and arbitrary dependence for all our livelihood and subsistence, to contest with him that maintaineth us, or to complain of his dealing, is ridiculously absurd and vain.

Upon a moral account we have less reason to challenge ought, or to complain of any thing; for we deserve nothing but evil: if we rightly esteem and value ourselves, any thing will seem good enough for us, any condition will appear better than we deserve: duly examining the

imperfections and infirmities of our nature, the disorder and depravedness of our hearts, the demeanours and enormities of our lives, we cannot but apprehend, that we are even unworthy of the *crumbs which fall from our Master's table;* we cannot but acknowledge with the good Patriarch, that we are *less than the least of God's mercies.* Considering our natural unworthiness, we shall see that we deserve not so much as those common benefits which all men enjoy, and without which we cannot subsist; so that, in regard to them, we shall be ready to acknowledge with the Psalmist, *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him; or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!* Trying our hearts, and examining our ways, we shall soon discover it to be abundant mercy, that we are not utterly deprived of all good things, stript of all comforts, yea, dispossessed of our very being and life itself; that we are obliged to acknowledge, with those in the Lamentations, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* Were we far better than we are, yet it would not become us to contest with him, to whose disposal and judgment we are subject; as Job teacheth us: *Behold,* saith he, *God taketh away, who can hinder him, who will say unto him, What dost thou? If he will not withdraw his anger, the proud* helpers do stoop under him; how much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him; whom, though I were righteous, I would not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge:* but for us, men so unrighteous and guilty, to debate with, to question the proceedings of our Judge, it is much more unseemly.

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Matt. xv. 17.

Gen. xxxii. 10.

Ps. cxliv. 3. Job vii. 27.

Lam. iii. 22.

Job ix. 12, &c.

* Κήτη.

(Job ix. 32.)

Nothing can be more absurd, than for men so deeply indebted, than for sinners so very obnoxious to wrath, to be aggrieved in any state: shall we, who are conscious to ourselves of so many great sins against our God; who, by wilful transgressions or slothful neglects, have so much affronted and offended him; who have so little requited his love, and so much abused his patience; who have borne so little fruit, and rendered him so little service; shall we be angry that our humour is not pleased in all

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things? Shall we affect to swim in plenty, to wallow in pleasure, to bask ourselves in ease; to be fed with dainties, to be gaily clothed, to flourish in a brave and splendid condition, to be worshipped and honoured; who deserve not the meanest competence or lowest respect, to whom it is a great favour that we are permitted to subsist, whom strict justice would often have cast into utter misery and disconsolateness? It is not surely for such persons to be dissatisfied with any thing in this world, but to bless God's exceeding mercy, that they abide there on this side of the bottomless pit; it is their part, with most submissive patience, to bear whatever is inflicted on them, humbly saying with him in the Prophet, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* Seeing, whatever our crosses or sufferings be, we cannot but confess to God, with those in Ezra, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve;* being gainers upon the matter, having so much of our debt remitted in effect, being, in comparison to what was due to us, very tolerably, yea very favourably dealt with, why should we be dissatisfied? If in such cases men should deal so favourably with us, we should be much pleased, and ready to thank them; why then should we take it ill of God, when he, even in his hardest proceedings against us, expresseth so much indulgence and mercy?

Mic. vii. 9.

Ezra ix. 13.

If we must be displeased, and lust to complain, we have reason much rather to accuse ourselves, than to exclaim at Providence, to bewail our sins, than to deplore our fortune; for our evils are not indeed so much the voluntary works of God, who *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men,* as the natural products of our sins, which we do wilfully commit: it is, as the Prophet speaketh, *our sins* that *withhold good things from us,* and bring evil things upon us: *fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.* We make adversity necessary, or expedient for us, when we cry out upon it: we labour in planting, but cannot brook *the fruit of our doings;* we, like prodigals, fling away our estate in wanton profusions, then complain of want; we affect

Lam. iii. 33. Αὐθαίρετα πήματα.

Jer. v. 25.

Psal. cvii. 17.

Jer. xvii. 10. xxi. 14. xxxii. 19. vi. 19.

and choose the causes, but loathe, and cannot abide the certain consequences; so fond in our conceits, so perverse are we in our affections: *Wherefore doth the living man complain for the punishment of his sins?* so well might the Prophet demand and expostulate. SERM. XXXVIII. Lam iii. 39. גבר

We may farther, looking on ourselves, consider ourselves as servants to God, or rather as slaves, absolutely subject to his disposal; and shall any servant, shall a mere slave presume to choose his place, or determine his rank in the family? Shall he appoint to himself what office he will discharge, what garb he shall go in, what diet he must have; what he will do, and how he shall be accommodated? Is it not fit that all these things should be left to our Master's discretion and pleasure? It is most reasonable that we should thoroughly acquiesce in his determination: even a Pagan philosopher could teach us, that this is reasonable; who thus piously directeth his speech to God: *For the rest use me to what thou pleasest. I do consent unto thee, and am indifferent. I refuse nothing which seemeth good to thee. Lead me whither thou wilt; put on me what garment thou pleasest. Wilt thou have me to be a governor or a private man, to stay at home or to be banished away, to be poor or to be rich? I will, in respect to all these things, apologise for thee with men*[f]; thus did Epictetus say, and such speech well becometh our relation to God: servants should be content with their masters' appointments and allowances; they should not only themselves forbear to find fault with, but be ready to maintain his proceedings against any, who shall presume to reprehend or blame them. Especially such servants as we are, who, *after we have done all things commanded us, must acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants;* such as can bring no considerable benefit to our Lord, or anywise advance his state; such as therefore cannot challenge any wages from him, more than he out of mere favour is Luke xvii. 10.

[f] Χρῶ μοι λοιπὸν ἐις ὅ ἂν θέλῃς. Ὁμογνωμονῶ σοι, ἴσος εἰμί. Οὐδὲν παραιτοῦμαι τῶν σοι δοκούντων. Ὅπου θέλεις ἄγε, ἣν θέλεις ἐσθῆτα περίθεις. Ἄρχειν μὲ θέλεις, ἰδιοτεύειν, μένειν, φεύγειν, πένεσθαι, πλουτεῖν; ἐγώ σοι ὑπὲρ ἁπάντων τούτων πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπολογήσομαι *Arr.* ii. 16.

SERM XXXVIII. pleased to allow: could we by our labours enrich God, or raise him in dignity, or procure delight to him, it might seem congruous that he should answerably reward us; but as he getteth nothing by us, so we cannot require any thing from him: our best services do indeed rather need pardon than deserve any reward: no man hath lived so well, that he can pretend any thing from God, that he is indeed not much behind hand in his accounts with God, having received from God far more of benefit than he can return to him in service: no man, without extreme presumption and arrogance, can offer to prescribe, in what measure, or what manner God should reward him.

Again, if we consider ourselves as the children of God, either by birth or nature, or by adoption and grace, how can we be discontent for any thing? Have we not thence great reason to hope, or rather to be confident, that we shall never want any good thing, (necessary or convenient for us,) that no great evil shall ever oppress us? For is not God hence by paternal disposition inclined, is he not in a manner, by paternal duty, engaged, in all needful occasions, to supply and succour us? Can we, without great profaneness, and no less folly, surmise, that he, which is so immensely good, will be a bad, (an unkind, or a neglectful) Father to us? No, as there is no other father in goodness comparable to him, so none, in real effects of benignity, can come near him; so our Lord assureth us; *If ye*, saith he, *being evil, know how to give good things unto your children; how much more will our heavenly Father give good things to his children that ask him?* Matt. vii. 11.

If we consider ourselves as Christians, we have still more reason to practise this duty: as such, we are not only possessed of goods abundantly sufficient to satisfy our desires; we have hopes able to raise our minds above the sense of all present things; we have entertainments that ever may divert our minds, and fill our hearts with comfort: but we have also an assurance of competent supplies of temporal goods; for, *Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise both of the present life, and of that which is to come*: and, *If we seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its* 1 Tim. iv. 8. Matt. vi. 33.

righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us. It is indeed strangely unhandsome for a Christian ever to droop, or to be disconsolate; for a friend of God, and an heir of heaven, to think he wants any thing, or fear that he shall ever want; for him, whose treasure and heart are above, to be so concerned with any thing here, as deeply to resent it. SERM. XXXVIII.

Again, if we reflect upon ourselves as rational men, how for shame can we be discontent? Do we not therein much disparage that excellent perfection of our nature? Is it not the proper work of reason to prevent things hurtful or offensive to us, when that may be done; to remove them, if they are removable; if neither of these can be compassed, to allay and mitigate them; so that we may be able well to support them? Is it not its principal use to drive away those fond conceits, and to quell those troublesome passions, which create or foment disquiet and displeasure to us? If it cannot do this, what doth it signify? To what purpose have we it? Is not our condition really worse than that of brute beasts, if reason serveth only to descry the causes of trouble, but cannot enable to bear it? All the reasons we have produced, and all that we shall produce against discontent, will, if we are reasonable men, and reason availeth any thing, have this effect upon us.

Wherefore, considering ourselves, our capacities, our relations, our actions, it is most reasonable to be content with our condition, and with whatever doth befall us.

SERMON XXXIX.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

I have learned in whatever state, &c.

SERM. XXXIX. III. FARTHER, if we consider our condition, (be it what it will, how poor, how mean, how despicable and forlorn soever,) we can have from it no reasonable ground of discontent.

1. Our condition in this world cannot, if rightly estimated, and well managed, be extremely bad, or sorrowful; nothing here can occur insupportable, or very grievous in itself; we cannot, if we please, want any thing considerable, and the defect whereof may not be supplied, or supported by far better enjoyments. If we have high opinions of some things, as very excellent, or very needful for us, it is no wonder if we do want them, that our condition is unpleasant to us; if we take other things for huge evils, then, if they be incumbent on us, we can hardly scape being displeased: but if we thoroughly look through such things, and scan them exactly, valuing them, not according to fallacious impressions of sense, or illusive dreamings of fancy, but according to sound dictates of reason, we may find, that neither absence of the former, nor the presence of the latter doth make our condition much worse, or render our case deplorable.

We are, for instance, poor: that condition, rightly weighed, is not so very sad: for what is poverty? what but the absence of a few superfluous things, which please

Tert. de Pat. 7.

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wanton fancy rather than answer need[a]; without which nature is easily satisfied, and which if we do not affect, we cannot want? what is it but to wear coarse clothes, to feed on plain and simple fare, to work and take some pains, to sit or go in a lower place, to have no heaps of cash, or hoards of grain, to keep no retinue, to have few friends, and not one flatterer? and what great harm in this? It is a state which hath its no small conveniences and comforts, its happy fruits and consequences; which freeth us from many cares and distractions, from many troubles and crosses, from many encumbrances, many dangers, many temptations, many sore distempers of body and soul, many grievous mischiefs, to which wealth is exposed; which maintaineth health, industry, and sobriety; disposeth us to feed heartily, to move nimbly, to sleep sweetly; which preserveth us from luxury, from satiety, from sloth and unwieldiness[b]. It yieldeth disposition of mind, freedom and leisure to attend the study of truth, the acquist of virtue. It is a state which many have borne with great cheerfulness; many (very wise men) have voluntarily embraced; which is allotted by divine wisdom to most men; and which the best men often do endure; to which God hath declared an especial regard, which the mouth of truth hath proclaimed happy; which the Son of God hath dignified by his choice, and sanctified by his partaking deeply thereof: and can such a condition be very loathsome? can it reasonably displease us?

Vid. Plut. in Arist.

Psal. x. 14. xxxv. 10. lxviii. 10. lxix. 33. lxxii. 4, 13. cxl. 12. cxlvi. 7. cxlvii. 2.

Again, thou art, suppose, fallen into disgrace, or from honour and credit art depressed into a state of contempt and infamy? This also rightly prized is no such wretchedness; for what doth this import? what, but a change of opinion in giddy men, which thou dost not feel, which thou art not concerned in, if thou pleasest; which thou

Luke vi. 20. Jam. ii. 5. Isa. lxvi. 2.

[a] Τὰ δ' ἀργυρώματ' ἐστιν ἥτε πορφύρα
Εἰς τοὺς τραγῳδοὺς χρήσιμ' οὐκ εἰς τὸν βίον. *Socrat.*

[b] Si vis vacare animo, aut pauper sis oportet, aut pauperi similis.
Multis ad philosophandum obstitere divitiæ; paupertas expedita est, secura est. *Sen. Ep.* 17.
Sæpius pauper & fidelius ridet. *Sen. Ep.* 80.

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never hadst reason much to regard, or at all to rely upon? what is thy loss therein? it is the breaking of a bubble, the sinking of a wave, the changing of a wind, the cracking of a thing most brittle, the slipping away of a thing most fugacious and slippery: what is honour, and fame, but thought? and what more flitting, what sooner gone away than a thought? And why art thou displeased at the loss of a thing so very slender, and slim? If thou didst know its nature, thou canst not be disappointed; if thou didst not, it was worth thy while to be thus informed by experience, that thou mayest not any more regard it. Is the contempt, thou hast incurred, from thy fault? bear the consequence thereof patiently, and do thy best by removing the cause to reverse the effect: is it undeserved and causeless? be satisfied in thy innocence, and be glad that thou art above the folly and injustice of those who contemn thee. Let thy affections rather be employed in pity of theirs, than in displeasure for thy own case. Did, let me ask thee again, the good opinion of men please thee? that pleasure was fond and vain, and it is well thou art rid of it: did it not much affect thee? why then dost thou much grieve at the loss thereof? Is not also thy fortune in this kind the same with that of the best men? have not those who have deserved most honour, been exposed to most contempt? *But now*, Job could say, *they that are younger than I have me in derision,——they abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.* And, *I am*, could that great and good King say, *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head:* ——and, we are *defamed*, we are *reviled*, *we are made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things unto this day*, could the holy Apostles say; and, *He is despised and rejected of men——he was despised and we esteemed him not*, was said of our Lord himself: and can this condition then in just esteem be so very pitiful, or grievous?

Job xxx. 1, 10.

Ps. xxii. 6, 7.

1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.

Isa. liii. 3.

But thou art perhaps troubled because thou art wrongfully censured, odiously traduced and defamed, abused by

slander, or by detraction; which asperseth thee with things whereof thou art no-wise guilty, or representeth thee in a character unworthy of thee[c]: be it so; what then? why doth this so much affect thee? SERM. XXXIX.

Is not every man subject to these things? are not the greatest men, are not the wisest men, are not the best men liable to the same? yea chiefly liable, excellency being the special mark of envy and obloquy? Can any good men escape free of them among so many bad men, whose doings as goodness doth reproach, so it provoketh their malignity? Canst thou imagine to pass thy days in so unjust and spiteful a world without incurring such bad usage? can so many vain, so many bold, so many lawless tongues be tied up, or kept within compass of truth or equity? Wilt thou suffer it to be in the power of any man at his pleasure so easily to discompose and vex thee? because he will be bad, shalt thou be miserable? why dost thou not rather please thyself in the conscience of thy endeavouring to deserve and do well; in thy innocence, and clearness from the blame which they impose on thee; in thy having given no cause of such offence and outrage? why dost thou not rather pity their unworthiness and unhappiness, who stoop to so mean and base practices, than fret at them, as bad to thee? They do themselves far more mischief, than they can do thee. Ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἠδίκησαν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἠδίκημαι. *Theod. Ep.* 80.

And why dost thou not consider, that indeed thou art guilty of many faults, and full of real imperfections, so that no man can easily derogate from thee more than thou deservest: he may indeed tax thee unjustly, he may miss in the particulars of his charge, he may discover groundless contempt and ill-will toward thee: but thou knowest thyself to be a grievous sinner, and it is just that thou shouldst be reproached, (God, for thy humiliation or thy correction, may have ordered him, as David said he might have ordered Shimei, *to curse* thee;) thou hast therefore

[c] Exempl. Jeremiæ. *Chrys. ad Olymp.* 16.

Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit. *Hier. Ep.* 39. (*ad Asellam.*)

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more need to be humble in reflection on thyself, than to swell with disdain in regard to his injury.

Thou shouldst improve this dealing, and make it wholesome to thee, by taking occasion thence to correct thy real faults, and endeavouring to become truly more worthy; that so thy conscience may be a firm bulwark against all detraction and obloquy: in fine, satisfy thyself by *committing thy soul with patience in well-doing* unto thy Judge, who assuredly will do thee right, will protect thy reputation, and clear thy innocence: his judgment is only worth regarding, be little concerned with any other.

Theodor. Ep. 83.

Again, being disappointed and crossed in the success of their projects, or undertakings, is wont to put men, as they conceive, into a woeful case: but why so? why, let me ask thee, who art discontented upon this score, didst thou build much expectation upon uncertainties? didst thou not foresee a possibility, that thy design might miscarry? and if so, why art thou not prepared to receive what happeneth? was it not an adventure? why then art thou troubled with thy chance? Is he not a silly gamester, that will fret and fume at a bad cast, or at the loss of a game? Didst thou refer the business to God's disposal and arbitrement? if not, thou deservedst to be crossed, and rather confess thy fault, than complain of thy fortune: if thou didst so, then be consistent with thyself, and acquiesce in his determination: in fine, what is thy loss, is it of thy care and pain? would it have been much better, that thou hadst been careless or idle? but hast thou not in lieu of them got some wisdom and experience? hast thou not (if thy attempt was reasonable and worthy) exercised thy wit, thy courage, thy industry? hast thou not (by thy defeat) got an opportunity to express equanimity and patience? if thou so improvest thy disappointment, thou art a gainer by thy loss, thou *dost more than conquer* by thy defeat: however, since the gain, the credit, the preferment thou didst aim at, and hast missed, are things in themselves of no great value, and such as thou mayest well live without, as other good men have done, thou canst not have

much reason to be displeased upon this account, or to reckon thy condition very disastrous. SERM. XXXIX.

But friends, will some men say, have been unkind, have been ungrateful, have been fickle and false, have neglected, have deserted, have betrayed me; *It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it, &c.* this is indeed commonly most grievous; yet being scanned will not render a man's condition so lamentable: for, such misbehaviour of friends is more their calamity than ours: the loss of bad friends is no damage, but an advantage; it is but the loss of a mischief, and a trouble: the fewer we come to have of such, the more time we save, the less trouble we meet with, the greater security we enjoy. The kindness we have shewed, the obligations we have put on such, are not quite lost, they will bring the reward due to humanity and fidelity; it will yield satisfaction to us, that, however, we have been kind and faithful to them. The fidelity of remaining true friends may satisfy us: however if all other friendships should fail, there is one remains, worth millions of other friends, who can never prove unfaithful, or inconstant, who never will be unmindful of us, or deficient in kindness toward us.

Psa. lv. 12.

Jam sibi pœnas dedit qui peccavit. *Sen. de Gr.* ii. 30.

The death of friends doth, it may be, oppress thee with sorrow. Vid. Sen. Ep. 63.

But canst thou lose thy best friend? canst thou lose the presence, the conversation, the protection, the advice, the succour of God? is he not immortal? is he not immutable? is he not inseparable from thee? canst thou be destitute of friends, whilst he stands by thee? Is it not an affront, an heinous indignity to him, to behave thyself, as if thy happiness, thy welfare, thy comfort had dependence on any other but him? is it not a great fault to be unwilling to part with any thing, when he calleth for it? Vid Greg. Naz. Ep. 202.

Neither is it a loss of thy friend, but a separation for a small time: he is only parted from thee as taking a little journey, or going for a small time to repose[d]: within

[d] Οὐ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν ὁ πάντα ἄριστος ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου φωνὴν, ἀλλὰ καθεύδει ὕπνον τοῦ συνήθους μακρότερον. *Theod. Ep.* 68.

Ἀποδημίαν τοίνυν παρακαλῶ μακρὰν τὴν τελευτὴν, &c. *Theod. Ep.* 14.

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a while we shall be sure to meet again, and joyfully to congratulate, if we are fit, in a better place, and more happy state; *præmisimus, non amisimus;* we have sent him thither before, not quite lost him from us e.

Thy friend, if he be a good man, (and in such friendships only we can have true satisfaction,) is himself in no bad condition, and doth not want thee; thou canst not therefore reasonably grieve for him; and to grieve only for thyself is perverse selfishness and fondness f.

But thou hast lost a great comfort of thy life, and advantage to thy affairs here; is it truly so? is it indeed an irreparable loss, even secluding the consideration of God, whose friendship repaireth all possible loss? What is it, I pray, that was pleasant, convenient, or useful to thee in thy friend, which may not in good measure be supplied here? was it a sense of hearty good-will, was it a sweet freedom of conversation, was it sound advice or kind assistance in thy affairs? and mayst thou not find those left, which are alike able and willing to minister those benefits? may not the same means, which knit him to thee, conciliate others also to be thy friends? He did not alone surely possess all the good-nature, all the fidelity, all the wisdom in the world, nor hath carried them all away with him: other friends, therefore, thou mayst find to supply his room; all good men will be ready, if thou art good, to be thy friends; they will heartily love thee; they will be ready to cheer thee with their sweet and wholesome society, to yield thee their best counsel and help upon any occasion: is it not therefore a fond and unaccountable affection to a kind of personality, rather than want of a real convenience, that disturbeth thee?

Vid. Sen. Ep. 63.

In fine, the same reasons, which in any other loss may

e Cur doles si periisse non credis? cur impatienter feras subductum interim quem credis reversurum? profectio est quam putas mortem. *Tert. de Pat.* 9. *Sen. Ep.* 63.

f Impatientia in ejusmodi et spei nostræ male ominatur, et fidem prævaricatur, &c. *Tert. ibid.*

Ποῦ τὸ τῆς ἀγάπης ἀγαθὸν, ἑαυτῷ τὰ ῥᾴω διδόντα τῷ πλησίον ἀπονέμειν τὰ προσαντίστερα; *Naz. Or.* 19.

comfort us, should do it also in this: neither a friend nor any other good thing we can enjoy under any security of not soon losing it; our welfare is not annexed to one man no more than to any other inferior thing: this is the condition of all good things here to be transient and separable from us; and accordingly we should be affected toward them. SERM. XXXIX.

Fragile fractum est, mortale mortuum est.

But farther, it perhaps displeaseth us, that the course of the world doth not go right, or according to our mind; that justice is not well dispensed, that virtue is under hatches, that worth is not considered, that industry is not rewarded, that innocence and modesty are trampled upon; that favour, partiality, corruption, flattery, craft, impudence do carry all before them; devouring all the encouragements due to honest industry: this may be observed, but why should it displease? art thou guilty of contributing to this? then mend; if not, then bear; especially seeing thou canst not help it; for so it always hath been, and ever will be in the world, that things never have gone there as the wisest judge, or the best men desire: there have never been good men enough to sway the world; nor will the few good men that are, be so active in promoting public good, as bad are in driving on their private designs. Doth not this course of things necessarily spring from the nature of men, which therefore we should no more be vexed at, than for that a serpent hath poison, or that a wasp hath a sting? we cannot wonder at it, why then should we be strangely affected by it? could any man ever have been pleased, if this were a sufficient cause of displeasure? However the world goes, we may yet make a tolerable shift; God is engaged competently to provide for us; that should satisfy us. God observeth these things no less than we, and he can easily hinder them, yet he thinketh good to suffer them; and shall not we do so likewise? There is in fine appointed a judgment hereafter, when all these things shall be redressed and set straight; when justice and virtue shall triumph, when integrity and industry shall find their due recompense: it is

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but a moment to that time, and till then we may rest satisfied.

Thus, if we do survey and rightly state things, which cause discontent, and seem to render our condition hard and sad, we shall find, that not from the things, but from ourselves all the mischief proceeds: we by our imagination give to the lightest things a weight, and swell the smallest things into a vast bulk; we fancy them very frightful and doleful, then we tremble and grieve at them. Mere names (the names of poverty, of disgrace, of defeat) do scare us, without consulting reason, and considering how terrible the things are themselves. We follow silly prejudices, judging that highly good, which the vulgar admireth; that very evil, which the weakest sort of men are wont to complain of; hence so commonly doth our case seem grievous. But in truth there is no condition so bad, but if we manage it well and wisely, if we bend our mind to comply with it, if we moderate our passions about the accidents thereof, if we vigilantly embrace and enjoy the advantages thereof, may not be easily supportable, yea prove very comfortable to us; it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which do create the trouble, which seemeth adherent to any condition, and embittereth every state; which from any slight occasion doth create vexation, and turneth every event into disaster.

2. As there is no condition here perfectly and purely good[g], (not deficient in some conveniences, not blended with some troubles,) so there is none so thoroughly bad, that it hath not somewhat convenient and comfortable therein; seldom or never all good things do forsake a man at once, or all mischiefs together assail him; somewhat usually abideth, which, well improved or wisely enjoyed, may satisfy a man, yea render his estate comparable to theirs, who to vulgar eyes appear to be in the best condition; there is in every condition somewhat of good

[g] —— usque adeo nulla est sincera voluptas
Solicitique aliquid lætis intervenit. *Ovid.*

compensating for its evils, and reducing it to a balance with other more plausible states[h]. We are, suppose again, in poverty, (that instance I propound usually, as the most ordinary ground of discontent;) but have we therewith good health? then most rich men may envy us, and reasonably we should not exchange our state with many crazy princes; have we therewith our liberty? that is an inestimable good, which oftentimes the greatest men have wanted, and would have purchased with heaps of gold: have we therein a quiet mind, and a free use of our time? it is that which wisest men have prized above any wealth, and which the chief men of the world would be glad to taste of: have we a clear reputation? we have then the best good that any wealth can yield, we have more than many can obtain in the most splendid fortune: have we any friends sticking to us? that is more than the richest persons can assure themselves of, to whom it is near impossible to distinguish the friends of their person from the flatterers of their fortune; it is a privilege and solace which princes are hardly capable to arrive at: have we a bare competency, sufficient to maintain our life? we thereby keep our appetites in better compass, and our faculties in greater vigour; we thence better relish all things; we in consequence thereof avoid the burdens, the diseases, the vices of sloth and luxury: have we farther (as, if we are not very bad, we shall in this case assuredly have, humanity disposing all men thereto,) the compassion of men? is not this somewhat better than that envy, that ill-will, that obloquy, which usually do attend wealth and prosperity? Why then, if our poor state hath so manifold conveniences, do we so much distaste it? why do we so dwell and pore on the small inconveniences we feel under it, overlooking or slighting the benefits we may enjoy thereby? This indeed ordinarily is our folly and infirmity, that the want of any little thing, which we fancy or affect, doth

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Prov. xxvii. 7.

[h] Assuescendum conditioni suæ; et quam minimum de illa querendum, et quicquid habet circa se commodi apprehendendum est: nihil tam acerbum est, ex quo non æquus animus solatium inveniat. *Sen. de Tranq. An. cap.* 10.

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affect, doth hinder us from satisfaction in all other things: *One dead fly* causeth all our *ointment to stink;* the possession of a kingdom will not keep us from being *heavy and displeased,* as Ahab was, if we cannot acquire a small vineyard near us; on that one thing our head runs continually, our heart is wholly set, we can think on, we can taste nothing else; the want of that, notwithstanding all our affluence, doth pinch us; our dainties thence do prove insipid, our splendours appear dim, every thing but that is a toy unto us; so capriciously and unaccountably prone are we to discontent.

Eccles. x. 1.

1 Kings xxi. 1.

3. Is our condition, let me ask again, so extremely bad, that it cannot be much worse? Are we sunk to the bottom of all calamity? No surely; God's providence will not suffer, the state of things here can never admit that to be; here are succours always ready against extremities; our own wit and industry, the help of relations or friends, the natural pity and charity of our neighbours, will preserve us from them; especially persons in any measure innocent can never come near them: there will therefore never fail some good matter of content in what remains; a few good things, well improved, may greatly solace us. But, however, let us imagine our case to be the worst that can be; that a confluence of all temporal mischiefs and wants hath arrived, that we are utterly bereaved of all the comforts this world afforded; that we are stripped of all our wealth, quite sunk in our reputation, deserted of every friend, deprived of our health and our liberty; that all the losses, all the disgraces, all the pains which poor Job sustained, or far more and greater than those, have together seized on us; yet we cannot have sufficient reason to be discontent; for that nevertheless we have goods left to us in our hands or within our reach, far surpassing all those goods we have lost, much outweighing the evils we do undergo: when the world hath done its worst, we remain masters of things incomparably better than it, and all it containeth; the possession whereof may, and, if we be wise, will abundantly satisfy us. We are men still, and have our reason left behind, which alone, in worth, ex-

'Job, who ἐκίνωσεν αὐτῷ (τῷ διαβόλῳ) βελοθήκην ἅπασαν καταστοξευόμενον δι' αὐτῷ, &c. *Chrys. ad Olymp.* 2.

ceedeth all the treasures of the world; in well using which, and thereby ordering all things for the best, we become more worthy, and more happy than the most fortunate fool on earth; we may therein find more true satisfaction, than any wealth or any glory here can minister; we may have a good conscience left, (the sense of having lived well heretofore, or at least a serious resolution to live well hereafter,) and that is a *continual feast*, yielding a far more solid and savoury pleasure, than the most ample revenue can afford; we may have hope in God, (the author and donor of all good things,) and thereby far greater assurance of our convenient subsistence and welfare, than all present possessions can bestow; we have reserved a free access to the throne of grace, and thereby a sure means (grounded on God's infallible word and promise) of obtaining whatever is good for us; we have a firm right to innumerable spiritual blessings and privileges, each of them justly valuable beyond whole worlds of pelf; we can, in a word, (we can if we please,) enjoy God's favour, which immensely transcendeth all other enjoyments, which vastly more than countervaileth the absence of all other things: of this, by applying ourselves to the love and service of God, we are infallibly capable; of this no worldly force or fortune can despoil us; we having this, our condition cannot be poor, contemptible, or pitiful; it is indeed thereby most rich, glorious, and happy; for how can he be poor, that hath the Lord of all things always ready to supply him; who hath *God*, as the Psalmist is wont to speak, to be *his portion for ever?* how can he be despicable, that hath the honour to have the Sovereign Majesty of the world for his especial friend? how can he be miserable who enjoyeth the fountain of all happiness, who hath *the light of God's countenance* to cheer him, who hath the consolations of God's holy Spirit to refresh and revive him? what can he want, who, beside his present interest in all the needful effects of God's bountiful love, is an heir of heaven and everlasting bliss? Seeing, therefore, it is in our power to be religious; seeing we may, if we will, (God's grace concurring, which preventeth us to seek,

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Prov. xv. 15.

Psal. lxxiii. 26. xvi. 5. cxix. 57. cxlii. 5.

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which never is withheld from those who seek it,) be good Christians! seeing nothing can hinder us from fearing God, or can *separate us from his love*, neither can any thing render our condition bad or unhappy, really distressed or needy: *O fear the Lord*, saith the Psalmist, *for there is no want to them that fear him; the young lions* (or. the rich, as the LXX. render it) *do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing;* and, *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing*, saith the Wise Man; and, *The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him*, saith the Prophet; and, *Who is he that shall harm you*, (or do ill to you, or make you worse,) *if ye be followers of that which is good?* saith St. Peter; and, *We know*, saith St. Paul, *that to them who love God, all things co-operate for good;* and, *Godliness*, saith he again, *with contentedness is great gain;* that is, supposing we have the goods which piety ministereth, although we have nothing more, we are, if we can be content, very well to pass; it is abundantly sufficient for us.

Rom. viii. 39.

Psal. xxxiv. 9.

Πλούσιοι ἐπτώχευσαν. LXX.

Eccles. viii. 5.

Ezra viii. 22.

1 Pet. iii. 13.

Ὁ κακώσων.

Rom. viii. 28.

1 Tim. vi 6.

Why then, I pray, are we discontent; what do we groan or grieve for? what is it that we do want? is it the use of reason, is it virtue, is it God's favour? then indeed we have good cause to be displeased; for the want of those things is indeed lamentable; but if we do want them, it is only ourselves that we should complain of; for we may have them if we will, and who can help it if we will not? Who, if we shall wilfully deprive ourselves of them, will be concerned to mind our complaints? But is it only a lump of trash, or a puff of honour, or a flash of pleasure, that we do need? Is it that we cannot so delicately glut our bellies, or so finely clothe our backs, or so thoroughly soothe our fancies, as we could wish, that we so pitifully moan? Is it being restrained in some respects from the swinge of our humour, is it that we are not so much regarded, or are slighted by some persons, is it that we are crossed in some design, that so discomposeth and discourageth us? then are we sottishly fond and childish in our conceits and our affections; for proper it is to children, whenas they want no solid or substantial

goods to wail for worthless toys and trinkets; it is for children, when they have not their will in petty and impertinent matters, to cry and lament; children are much affected with every word, or little shew that crosseth them: if we were (as St. Paul chargeth us to be) *perfect men*, if we had manly judgments and manly affections towards things, we should not so regard or value any of these temporal and transitory things, either good or evil, as by the want of one sort, or by the presence of the other, to be much disturbed; we should, with St. Paul, style any present evil, τὸ ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως, *a lightness of affliction*; we should with him reckon, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glories which shall be revealed to us*; we should, with St. Peter, *greatly rejoice, though for a season we are in heaviness, through manifold trials*, or afflictions. we should esteem any condition here very tolerable, yea very good. SERM. XXXIX. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Rom. viii. 18. 1 Pet. i. 6.

4. In truth, (if we will not mince the matter, and can bear a truth sounding like a paradox,) usually our condition is then better, when it seemeth worse; then we have most cause to be glad, when we are aptest to grieve; then we should be thankful when we do complain: that it appeareth otherwise to us, it is because in our taxations of things we do ordinarily judge (or rather not judge, but fancy, not hearing or regarding any dictate of reason) like beasts; prizing things merely according to present sense or shew, not examining their intrinsic natures, or loking forward into their proper fruits and consequences.

Adversity (or a state, wherein we are not furnished with all accommodations grateful to sense or fancy; or wherein somewhat doth cleave to us offensive to those inferior powers of soul) is the thing which we chiefly loathe and abominate; whereas, in true judgment, nothing commonly is more necessary, more wholesome, more useful and beneficial to us; nothing is more needful, or conducible to the health of our soul, and to our real happiness, than it: it is the school of wisdom, wherein our minds are disciplined and improved in the knowledge of the best things, whence it is termed παιδεία, that is, instructive

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chastisement[h]; so David found it; *It is*, said he, *good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes;* and our Lord himself, ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε, *He learned obedience from what he suffered.* It is the Academy wherein virtue is acquired and exercised[i]; so God meant it to his people: *The Lord thy God*, saith Moses, *led thee this forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, and prove thee.* So the Wise Man saith, that *by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better:* and, *that stripes do cleanse the inward parts of the belly.* And, *It yieldeth*, saith the Apostle, *the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.*

Psal. cxix. 71.
1 Cor. xi. 32. Κρινόμενοι ὑπὸ Κυρίου παιδευόμεθα.
Heb. v. 8.
Deut. viii. 2.
Eccles. vii. 3.
Prov. xx. 30.
Heb. xii. 11.
James i. 3.

It is the furnace of the soul, wherein it is tried, cleansed, and refined from the dross of vain conceits, of perverse humours, of vicious distempers: *When*, saith Job, *he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold;* and, *Gold*, saith the Wise Man, *is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity*[k].

Rom. v. 3.
Job xxiii. 10.
(Psal. lxvi. 10.)
Eccles. ii. 5.
Sap. iii. 5.
(Isa. i. 25. xlviii. 10.
Mal. iii. 23.
Dan. xi. 35.)

It is the method whereby God reclaimeth sturdy sinners to goodness, engageth them to seek and serve himself: so of the Israelites the Prophet saith, *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them;* so Manasses, *when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers;* so Nebuchadnezzar, after being driven from his kingdom, *his understanding returned unto him, and he blessed the most High, and praised and honoured him that liveth for ever;* so David himself, *Before*, said he, *I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*

Isa. xxvi. 16. xxix. 19.
Hos. v. 15.
Ps. lxxviii. 34. cvii. 4, &c. lxxxiv. 16.
2 Chron. xxiii. 12.
Dan. iii. 34.
Psal. cxix. 67.

It is that whereby God doth prepare men, and doth

[h] ——— multoque in rebus acerbis,
Acrius advertunt animos ad relligionem. *Lucret.* iii. p. 64.

Καὶ γὰρ τὸν τύφον περισπᾷ, καὶ τὴν ῥᾳθυμίαν ἐκκόπτει πᾶσαν ἡ θλῖψις, καὶ πρὸς ὑπομονὴν ἀλείφει κἀκαλύπτει τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων τὴν εὐτέλειαν, καὶ πολλὴν εἰσάγει τὴν φιλοσοφίαν, &c. *Chrys. in* 2 *Cor. Orat.* 26.

[i] Miraris tu, si Deus, ille bonorum amantissimus qui illos quam optimos esse atque excellentissimos vult, fortunam illis cum qua exerceantur assignat? *Sen. de Prov.* 2.

[k] Hence πειρασμὸς (trial) is the usual word signifying it. 1 Pet. i. 6, &c.

entitle them to the blessed rewards hereafter: [1] *Our light affliction,* saith St. Paul, *which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;* [2] and, *Ye,* saith St. Peter, *greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* Such is the nature, such the use, such the fruits of adversity. SERM. XXXIX.

[2] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Heb. x. 36. ὑπομονῆς ἔχετε χρείαν, &c.

[1] 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

It is indeed scarce possible that, without tasting it somewhat deeply, any man should become in good measure either wise or good [m]. He must be very ignorant of himself, (of his own temper and inclinations, of the strength and forces of his reason,) who hath not met with some rubs and crosses to try himself and them with: the greater part of things he must little understand, who hath not experienced the worst part: he cannot skill to wield and govern his passions, who never had them stirred up, and tossed about by cross accidents: he can be no good pilot in matters of human life, who hath not for some time sailed in a rough sea, in foul weather, among sands and shelves: he could have no good opportunity of employing thoroughly, or improving his wit, his courage, his industry, who hath had no straits to extricate himself from, no difficulties to surmount, no hardships to sustain [n]; the virtues of humility, of patience, of contentedness necessarily must be unknown to him, to whom no disgraces, no wants, no sore pains have arrived, by well enduring which, those virtues are learnt, and planted in the soul: scarce can he become very charitable or compassionate to

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco. *Æn.* 2.

[1] Ἡ γὰρ τῶν πόνων ἐπίτασις, μισθῶν ἐπίτασίς ἐστι, καὶ ἔρεισμα ἀσφαλὲς πρὸς τὸ μὴ κάμνειν ἐκπίπτειν· καὶ γὰρ τύφον καταστέλλει, καὶ ῥᾳθυμίαν ἀποτρέφει, καὶ φρονιμωτέρους ποιεῖ καὶ εὐλαβεστέρους· ἐργάζεται, &c. *Chrys.* tom. vi. Or. 9.

[m] Nihil infelicius eo, cui nihil unquam evenit adversi, non licuit enim illi se experiri. *Sen de Provid.* 3.

Non fert ullum ictum illæsa felicitas. *Ibid.*

[n] Quæ latet, inque bonis cessat non cognita rebus,
Apparet virtus, arguiturque malis. *Ovid. Trist.* iv. 3.

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Heb. ii. 17, 18. iv. 15, 16. 1 Sam. xxv. vi. 3.

others, who never himself hath felt the smart of affliction, or inconveniences of any distress; for even, as the Apostle teacheth us, our Saviour himself was obliged *to suffer tribulation*, that he thence might become *merciful*, and *disposed to succour the afflicted*. (No wonder, if he *that liveth in* continual *prosperity* be a Nabal, churlish and discourteous, insensible of other men's grievances:) and how can he express much piety or love to God, who is not (in submission to God's will, and for his sake) put to suffer any thing grievous, or want any thing desirable [o]? When can he employ any great faith or hope in God, who never hath any visible need of succour or relief from him, who hath other present aids to confide in? How can he purely delight in God, and place his sole felicity in him? How can he thoroughly relish spiritual things, whose affections are taken up by an affluence of other goods, whose appetites are glutted with enjoyment of other delights? What but deprivation of these things can lay open the vanity, the deceitfulness, and slipperiness of them? What but crosses and disappointments here can withdraw our minds from a fond admiration, and eager affection toward this world [p]? What but the want of these joys and satisfactions can drive us to seek our felicity otherwhere? when *the deceit of riches* possesseth us, how can we judge right of things? when cares about them distract us, how can we think about any thing that is good? when their snares entangle us, and their clogs encumber us, how can we be free and expedite in doing good? when abundance fatteneth our hearts, and ease softeneth our spirits, and success puffeth up our minds; when pride, sensuality, stupidity, and sloth (the almost inseparable adherents to large and prosperous estates) do continually insinuate them-

Matt. xiii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Luke x. 41. Deut. xxxii. 15. Prov. i. 32. xxx. 9. Hos. xiii. 6. Psa. xxx. 6. Jer. xxii. 21. Amos vi. 1. &c.

[o] Cum molestiæ in hujus vitæ fragilitate crebrescunt, æternam requiem nos desiderare compellunt. Mundus quippe iste periculosior est blandus, quam molestus, et magis cavendus quum se illicit diligi, quam cum admonet, cogitque contemni. *Aug. Ep.* 144.

[p] Ardua nam res est opibus non tradere mores. *Mart.*
Munera ista fortunæ putatis? insidiæ sunt. *Sen. Ep.* 8.
Viscata beneficia. *Ib.*

selves into us, what wisdom, what virtue are we like to have? SERM. XXXIX.

Seeing then adversity is so wholesome and useful, the remedy of so great mischiefs, the cause of so great benefits to us, why should we be displeased therewith [q]? To be displeased with it, is to be displeased with that which is most needful or most convenient for us, to be displeased with the health and welfare of our souls; that we are rescued from errors and vices, with all their black train of miseries and mischiefs; to be displeased that we are not detained under the reign of folly and wickedness, that we are not inevitably made fools and beasts. To be disgusted with Providence for affliction or poverty, is no other than as if we should be angry with our physician for administering a purge, or for prescribing abstinence to us [r]; as if we should fret at our chirurgeon for searching our wounds, or applying needful corrosives; as if we should complain of the hand which draweth us from a precipice, or *pulleth us out of the fire*. *Many benefits*, saith Seneca, *have a sad and rough countenance, as to burn and cut in order to healing* [s]: such a benefit of God is adversity to us; and as such with a gladsome and thankful mind should we receive it. Jude 23.

If with a diligent observation we consult experience, we shall find, that, as many have great cause to bewail that they have been rich, that they have been blinded and corrupted with prosperity, that they have *received their consolation here*; so many have great reason to be glad that they have been poor, that they have been disappointed, that they have tasted the bitter cup; it having instructed and corrected them; it having rendered them sober and considerate, industrious and frugal, mindful of Luke vi. 24. James v. 1. Amos vi. 1, &c.

[q] Gratulari et gaudere nos decet dignatione divinæ castigationis——O servum illum beatum, cujus emendationi Dominus instat; cui dignatur irasci, quem admonendi dissimulatione non decipit. *Tert. de Pat.* 11.

Ὁ ἁμαρτάνων κἂν μὴ κολάζηται, πάντων ἐστὶν ἀθλιώτερος, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. 5.

[r] Ἡ νοσούντων ἰατρεῖαι, ἢ ὑγιαινόντων γυμνασίαι. *Simpl.*

Κρείττων ἐνημερίας ἀχαλινώτου νόσος φιλόσοφος. *Naz. Ep.* 66.

[s] Beneficia multa tristem et asperam frontem habent, quemadmodum urere, et secare, ut sanes. *Sen de Benef.* v. 20.

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God, and devout toward him; and what we may rejoice in when past, why should we not bear contentedly when present? why should not the expectation of such good fruits satisfy us[t]?

Why should not such a condition, being so plainly better in itself, seem also better unto us? We cannot, if we are reasonable, but approve it in our judgment; why then are we not fully reconciled unto it in our affection?

[t] Horrorem operis fructus excusat. *Tert. Scorp. 5.*

Let our condition be what it will, we are the same. It doth not change us in our intrinsic worth or state. It is but a garment about us, or as weather.

——— Ego utrum
Nave ferar magna an parva, ferar unus et idem. *Hor. Ep.* ii. 2.

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OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

I have learned in whatsoever state, &c.

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5. BUT farther: Let our state be, as to quality, what it will, good or bad, joyful or unpleasant, we may yet consider, that it cannot be desperate, it may not be lasting; for there is not any necessary connection between the present and the future: wherefore, as the present, being momentary and transient, can little trouble us, so the future, being unknown and uncertain, should not dismay us. As no man reasonably can be elevated with confidence in a good state, presuming on its duration, (*Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;*) so no man should be dejected for a bad one, in suspicion that it will abide long[a]; seeing neither (considering the frequent vicissitudes that occur, and the flux nature of all things here) is each of them in itself stable; and the continuance of each absolutely dependeth on God's arbitrary disposal; and as God often doth overturn prosperity, to human judgment most firmly grounded, so he most easily can redress the to appearance most forlorn adversity; and he, being especially *the helper of the helpless*, doth frequently perform it: as *he poureth contempt*

Prov. xxvii. 1.

Psal. lxxii. 12. cvii. 9. x. 4. cvi. 9. Job xii. 21. Ps. cvii. 40.

[a] Multa intervenient quibus vicinum periculum vel prope admotum aut subsistat aut desinat, aut in alienum caput transeat. *Sen.*

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upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty; so he raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: he casteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble and meek: he sendeth the rich empty away, and filleth the hungry with good things. He maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Isa. xxv. 5. Job v. 11. Isa. ii. 11. Psal. xviii. 27. Ps. cxiii. 7. cvii. 41. Job v. 18. 1 Sam. ii. 7.

Considering, therefore, the reason of things, and the nature of God, if our state be at present bad or sorrowful, we have more reason to hope for its amendment, than to fear its continuance [b]. If, indeed, things went on in a fatal track, merely according to a blind and heedless chance, or a stiff and unalterable necessity; if there were no remedy from God's providence, or support by his grace to be expected, (although even then there would be no reason to grieve or complain; grief would be unreasonable, because unprofitable, complaint would be vain, because fortune and fate are deaf,) yet our infirmity might somewhat excuse that idle proceeding; but since *not a sparrow falleth to the ground, not a hair of our head perisheth;* nothing at all passeth otherwise, than by the voluntary disposition of a most wise and gracious God; since he doth always strictly view, and is very sensible of our griefs, yea doth in a manner sympathize with them, (according to those pathetical expressions in the Prophets: *His bowels sound, and are troubled; his heart is turned within him; In all their afflictions he was afflicted:*) since he farther hath by promise obliged himself to care *for us*, to support and succour us; we have all reason to hope, yea firmly to believe, (if at least we can find in our hearts to hope and to believe,) that we shall, as soon as it is good and expedient for us, find relief and ease; we shall have that εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν, that *seasonable succour*, of which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh.

Matt. x. 29. 30. Luke xxi. 18. Hos. xi. 8. Jer. xxxi. 20. Isa. lxiii. 9. 15. Luke xii. 29, 31. Heb. xiii. 5. Matt. vi. 33. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7. Psal lv. 23. xxxvii. 5. Heb. iv. 6.

[b] Τοῖς γε νῦν ἔχουσι ἐ σώφρονι λογισμῷ κεχρημένοις; ὅδιν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἀδόκητον, ὅδιν γὰρ τούτων σαθρὸν ἢ βέβαιον, &c. *Theod. Ep.* 14.

Sperat adversis, metuit secundis,
Alteram sortem bene præparatum pectus. *Hor. Carm.* ii. 10.

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Hope lieth at the bottom of the worst condition that can be: *The poor*, saith Job's friend, *hath hope*; and the rich can have no more; the future being equally close to both, the one can have no greater assurance to keep what he hath, than the other hath to get what he needeth; yea clearly the poor hath the advantage in the case; for God hath more declared, that he will relieve the poor man's want, than that he will preserve the rich man's store: if then we have in every condition a hope present to us, why do we *grieve as those who have no hope?* having ever ready the best anchor that can be to rest upon, (for in this rolling sea of human affairs, there is no firmer anchor than hope,) why do we let our minds be tossed with discontentful solicitudes and fears? why do we not rather, as the Apostle enjoineth, *rejoice in hope*, than grieve out of despair? why do we not, as the Prophet adviseth, *hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord?* The effect of so reposing ourselves for the future on God's providence would be perfect content and peace, according to that of the Prophet, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee;* and that of the Wise Man, *A patient man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him.*

Job v. 16. 1 Thess. iv. 13. Heb. vi. 19. Rom. xii. 12. Lam. iii. 26. Isa. xxvi. 3. Eccl. i. 23.

The truth is, and it seemeth very observable in order to our purpose, that most discontent ariseth, not from the sense of incumbent evil, but from suspicion, or fear of somewhat to come; although God at present dispenseth a competency of food and raiment, although we are in a tolerable condition, and feel no extremity of want or pain, yet, not descrying the way of a future provision for us, answerable to our desires, we do trouble ourselves; which demeanour implieth great ignorance and infidelity [c]: we think God obliged in kindness, not only to bestow upon us what is needful in its season, but to furnish us with stores, and allow us securities; we must have somewhat in hand, or we cannot trust him for the future: this is that which our

[c] Πολλῆς μικροψυχίας ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῶν ὕστερον συμβησομένων, ἢ μηδὲ ὅλως συμβησομένων τὴν ἀθυμίαν ἤδη καταθέσθαι ἢ κλῆσθαι. *Chrys. ad Stagir.* 2.

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Saviour cautioneth against, as the root of discontent and sign of diffidence; *Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof:* an advice no less pious, than manifestly full of reason and wisdom: for what a palpable folly is it to anticipate that evil which we would avoid; then, when we earnestly desire to put off sorrow, to pull it toward us; to feel that mischief which possibly shall never be; to give it a being in our fancy, which it may never have in nature [d]? Could we follow this advice, never resenting evils before they come, never prejudging about future events against God's providence and our own quiet; constantly depending on the Divine care for us; not taking false alarms, and trembling at things which shall never come near us; not being disturbed with panic fears; no discontent could ever seize upon us: for the present is ever supportable; our mind cannot be overwhelmed by the pangs of a transitory moment.

Matt. vi. 34.

If we need farther encouragement for application of this remedy, we have manifold experiments to assure its virtue: as there are innumerable promises, that none who hope in God shall be disappointed; so there are many illustrious examples of those, whom God hath in remarkable manner and wonderful measure relieved from wants and distresses, raising them out of deepest poverty, contempt, and worldly wretchedness, into most eminent degrees of wealth and prosperity: *Look*, saith the Hebrew Sage, *into the ancient generations, and see; Who hath trusted in the Lord, and hath been ashamed? Or who hath abiden in his fear, and hath been forsaken? Or who hath invoked him, and he did overlook (or despise) him?* If we look into those generations, we may there find Joseph, out of slavery and out of prison, advanced to be the chief governor of

Lam. iii. 25. Isa. xxx. 18. xl. 31. xlix. 23. Ps. xxv. 3. xxxvii. 9. ix. 10. 2 Chron. xxviii. 9. Ezr. viii. 22. Amos v. 4. 2 Chron. xv. 2. Eccl. ii. 10.

[d] Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius, et ante miseriam miser. *Sen. Ep.* 18. Ne sis miser ante tempus; cum illa quæ imminentia expavisti, fortasse nunquam ventura sint, certe nondum venerint, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 13.

Quod juvat dolori suo occurrere? satis cito dolebis cum venerit. *Ibid.*

Quoties incerta erunt maria, tibi fave. *Ibid.*

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a most flourishing kingdom: Moses, from an exile and a vagrant, made the redeemer and commander of a populous nation: Job, out of extreme poverty and disgrace, restored to be in wealth and honour *twice* greater than *the greatest men of the East:* Daniel, out of captivity and persecution, become president of the greatest monarchy on earth: David, raised out of great meanness to highest dignity, restored out of extreme straits into a most prosperous state: according to those words of admiration and acknowledgment: *O what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me; and yet didst thou turn and refresh me, yea and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again: thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side.* Thus hath God eminently done with divers; thus we may be assured that he will do competently with us, if with the like faith and patience we do, as they did, rely and wait upon him.

Job xlii. 10. i. 3.

Psal. lxxi. 18. lxix. 29. xviii. 36.

6. But farther, imagine or suppose, that our condition (so irksome to us at present) will certainly hold on to the utmost; yet consider also, that it soon will cease, and change of itself; since we are mortal, our evils cannot be perpetual, we cannot long be infested with them.

As it may debase and embitter all the prosperity in the world, to consider, that it is very fading and short-lived; that its splendour is but a blaze, its pleasure but a flash, its joy but as the *crackling of thorns;* so it should abate and sweeten any adversity, to remember, that it is passing away, and suddenly will be gone [e]. Put, I say, the worst case that can be: that it were certainly determined, and we did as certainly know it, that those things which cause our displeasure should continue through our whole life; yet since our life itself will soon be spun out, and with it all our worldly evils will vanish, why are we troubled? What is said of ourselves must in consequence be truly applied to them: *They flee like a shadow, and continue not;* they are *winds passing and coming not again:* they

Eccl. vii. 6.

1 Chron. xxix. 15.

[e] (Psal. xxvii. 13.) I had fainted, if I had not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

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are *vapours appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away;* they *wither like grass, and fade away as a leaf;* they may die before us, they cannot outlive us; our life is but *a handbreadth:* and can then our evils have any vast bulk? *Our age is as nothing*, and can any crosses therein be then any great matter? How can any thing so very short be very intolerable? It is but ὀλίγον ἄρτι λυπηθέντες, being, as St. Peter speaketh, *a little while yet aggrieved;* it is but μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, *a small quantity, whatever it be of time*, as the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, that *we need patience;* it is but τὸ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως, *an affliction for a present moment;* and therefore, as St. Paul intimateth, *light* and inconsiderable, that we are to undergo. We have but a very narrow strait of time to pass over, but we shall land on the firm and vast continent of eternity; when we shall be freed from all the troublesome agitations, from all the perilous storms, from all the nauseous qualms of this navigation: death (which may be very near, which cannot be far off) is a sure haven from all the tempests of life, a safe refuge from all the persecutions of the world, an infallible medicine of all the diseases of our mind and of our state; it will enlarge us from all restraints, it will discharge all our debts, it will ease us from all our toils, it will stifle all our cares, it will veil all our disgraces; it will still all our complaints, and bury all our disquiets; it will wipe all tears from our eyes, and banish all sorrow from our hearts; it perfectly will level all conditions, setting the high and low, the rich and poor, the wise and ignorant all together upon even ground[f]; smothering all the pomp and glories, swallowing all the wealth and treasures of the world.

Ps. lxxviii. 39. Jam. iv. 14. Psal. xc. 5. Isa. lxiv. 6. xl. 6. Psal. xxxix. 5. Omnia brevia tolerabilia esse debent, etiamsi magna. *Cic. Læl.* 1 Pet. i. 6. Heb. x. 36. 37. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

It is therefore but holding out a while, and all our molestation, of its own accord, will expire: time certainly will cure us; but it is better that we should owe that benefit to reason, and let it presently comfort us[g]; it is

[f] Ἴσος χῶρος ἅπασι πένησι τε ἠδὲ βασιλεῦσι.
Πάντες ἴσοι νέκυες. PHOCYL.

[g] Κρεῖττον——
Ὁ μέλλεις τῷ χρόνῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦτο χαρίζεσθαι τῷ λόγῳ. *Plut. ad Apoll.*

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better, by rational consideration, to work content in ourselves, using the brevity and frailty of our life as an argument to sustain us in our adversity, than only to find the end thereof as a natural and necessary means of evasion from it.

Serious reflection upon our mortality is indeed, upon many accounts, a powerful antidote against discontent; being apt to extirpate the most radical causes thereof.

Is it because we much admire these worldly things, that we so much grieve for the want of them? this will quell that admiration; for how can we admire them, if we consider, how in regard to us they are so very transitory and evanid How can we deem them much worth the having, when we can, for so little time, enjoy them, must so very soon quite part from them?

How can we dote on the world, seeing *the world*, as St. John saith, *passeth away, and the desire thereof.* 1 Joh. ii. 27. 1 Cor. vii. 31.

How can we value any worldly glory, since *all the glory of men is*, as St. Peter telleth us, *as the flower of the grass*; since, as the Psalmist saith, *man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish.* Eccl. i. 3, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Psal. xlix. 12. lxxxii. 6.

How can we *set our heart* on riches, considering that *riches are not for ever*, nor *can*, as the wise man saith, *deliver from death*; that, as St James admonisheth, *The rich man fadeth in his ways*; that it may be said to any rich man, as it was to him in the Gospel, *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee, and what thou hast prepared to whom shall it fall?* How can we fancy pleasure, seeing it is but πρόσκαιρος ἀπόλαυσις, *a very temporary fruition*; seeing, however we do *eat*, or *drink*, or *play*, it followeth, the *morrow we shall die?* Prov. xxvii. 24. xi. 4. James i. 11. Heb. xi. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 32.

How can we even admire any secular wisdom and knowledge, seeing that it is, as the Psalmist telleth us, true of every man, that *his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish*; particularly it is seen that *wise men die*, no otherwise than as *the foolish and brutish person perisheth*; that, as Solomon with regret observed, *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are going.* Psa. xlvi. 4. Psa. xlix. 10. Eccl. ix. 10. ii. 14.

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Do we admire the condition of those, who, upon the stage, do appear in the state of kings, do act the part of wealthy men, do talk gravely and wisely like judges or philosophers for an hour or two? If we do not admire those shadows and mockeries of state, why do we admire any appearances upon this theatre of the world, which are scarce a whit less deceitful, or more durable than they?

Is it an envious or disdainful regret at the advantages of others before us, (of others perhaps that are unworthy and unfit, or that are, as we conceit, no more worthy and capable than ourselves,) that gnaweth our heart? is it that such persons are more wealthy, more honourable, in greater favour or repute than we, that vexeth us? The consideration how little time those slender pre-eminences will last, may (if better remedies want due efficacy) serve toward rooting out that disease: the Psalmist doth several times prescribe it: *Fret not thyself*, saith he, *against evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb:* and again, *Be not afraid when one is made rich, and when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him:* and he being fallen into this scurvy distemper did follow his own prescription, *I was*, saith he, *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked——until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end; surely thou didst set them in slippery places——How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!* So likewise doth Solomon prescribe: *Let not*, saith he, *thine heart envy sinners:* Why not? *because surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off:* there will be a close of his undeserved prosperity, and a good success to thy well-grounded hope. So whatever doth breed discontent, the reflection upon our mortal and frail state will be apt to remove it.

Psa. xxxvii. 1, 2.

Psa. xlix. 17.

Psa. lxxiii. 3, 17.

Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.

It was that which comforted Job, and fortified his patience under so grievous pressures: *All the days of my appointed time*, said he, *I will wait till my change come:*

Job xiv. 14, 1.

he would not be weary while he lived of his afflictions, *because the days of man are few, and full of trouble:* if they are *full of trouble*, and that be a saddening consideration; yet they are *few*, and that maketh amends, that is comfortable. SERM. XL. Gen. xlvii. 9.

7. I add, that it is somewhat consolatory to consider, that the worse our condition is here, the better we may hope our future state will be; the more trouble and sorrow we endure, the less of worldly satisfaction we enjoy here, the less punishment we have to fear, the more comfort we may hope to find hereafter: for as it is a woful thing to have received *our portion*, to have enjoyed *our consolation in this life*, so it is a happy thing to have undergone our pain here. A purgatory under ground is probably a fable; but a purgatory upon earth hath good foundations; God is wont so to order it, that all men, that especially good men, shall undergo it: for, *What son is there whom the father doth not chasten? All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.* Heb. xii. 7. 2 Tim. iii. 12.

8. A like consolation it is to consider, that wealth and prosperity are great talents, for the improvement of which we must render a strict account, so that *to whom much is given, from him much shall be required;* so that they are, in effect, a burden, from which poverty includes an exemption: for the less we have, the less we have to do, the less we are responsible for; our burthen is smaller, our account will be more easy.

9. I shall, in reference to our condition and the nature of those things which cause our discontent, but propose one consideration more, or ask one question: What is it that we do want, or wait for? Is it any good we want, which by our care and industry we can procure; is it any evil that afflicteth us, which by the like means we can evade? If it be so, why then do we not vigorously apply ourselves to the business[h]; why do we not, instead of idle vexation and ineffectual complaints, use the means offered Τῶν μὴ δοναπῶν ἐφίεσθαι ἀνδραποδώδεις; καὶ ἡλίθιον, ξένε, θεομαχοῦντος ὡς μόνον οἴοντε, τοῖς δόγμασιν τοῖς ἑαυτῦ. *Epict.* iii. 24.

[h] ——— Πρᾴως φέρε μηδ' ἀγανάκτει,
Ἔσθαι δὲ πείρει, καθ' ὅσον δύνῃ. *Aur. Carm.*

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for our relief? Do we like and love trouble? let us then be content to bear it, let us hug it and keep it close; if not, let us employ the forces afforded us by nature, and by occasion, to repel and remove it.

But if we grieve and moan, because we cannot obtain some good above our reach, or not decline some unavoidable evil, what do we thereby but palpably express our folly, and wilfully heighten our woe; adding voluntary displeasure to the heap of necessary want or pain; impressing more deeply on ourselves the sense of them? in such a case, patience is instead of a remedy [i], which, though it do not thoroughly cure the malady, yet it somewhat alleviateth it, preventing many bad symptoms, and assuaging the paroxysms thereof [k]. What booteth it to wince and kick against our fortune? to do so will inflame us, and make us foam, but will not relieve or ease us: if we cannot get out of the net, or the cage, to flutter and flounce will do nothing but batter and bruise us [l].

But farther, to allay our discontents, let us consider the world, and general state of men here.

1. Look *first* upon the world, as it is commonly managed and ordered by men: thou perhaps art displeased, that thou dost not prosper and thrive therein; that thou dost not share in the goods of it; that its accommodations and preferments are all snapt from thee; that thy pretences are not satisfied, and thy designs fail: this thou dost take to be somewhat hard and unequal, and therefore art grieved. But if thou art wise, thou shouldst not wonder; if thou art good, thou shouldst not be vexed hereat: for thou hast not, perhaps, any capacity for this world; thy temper and disposition are not framed to suit with its way; thy principles and rules do clash with it, thy resolutions

[i] —— Levius fit patentia
Quicquid corrigere est nefas. *Hor.*

[k] Animus æquus optimum est ærumnæ condimentum. *Plaut. Rud.*

[l] Ἐπὶ ζημίᾳ χρημάτων, καὶ θανάτῳ, καὶ ἀῤῥωστίᾳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς συμπίπτουσιν ἡμῖν δεινοῖς ἀλγοῦντες καὶ ἀθυμοῦντες ὐ μόνον ὠδεμίαν ἀπο ταύτης καρτόμεθα παραμυθίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπιτείνομεν τὰ δεινά. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. 3.

Οἱ δὲ τῷ πάθει δελωθέντες ὠδὲν μὲν κερδαίνουσιν ὀλοφυρόμενοι, ἀνιαρῶς δὲ βιώσονται, καὶ παροξυνοῦσι τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἡγεμόνα. *Theod. Ep.* 15.

and designs do not well comport with prosperity here; thou canst not, or wilt not use the means needful to compass worldly ends: thou perhaps hast a meek, quiet, modest, sincere, steady disposition; thou canst not be pragmatical and boisterous, eager and fierce, importunately troublesome, intolerably confident, unaccountably versatile and various: thou hast certain pedantic notions about right and wrong, certain romantic fancies about another world, (unlike to this,) which thou dost stiffly adhere to, and which have an influence upon thy actions: thou hast a squeamish conscience, which cannot relish this, cannot digest that advantageous course of proceeding; a scrupulous humour, that hampereth thee, and curbeth thee from attempting many things which would serve thy purpose; thou hast a spice of silly generosity, which maketh divers profitable ways of acting (such as forging and feigning, supplanting others by detraction and calumny, soothing and flattering people) to be below thee, and unworthy of thee; thou thinkest thyself obliged, and art peremptorily resolved to observe strict rules of justice, of humanity, of charity, to speak as thou meanest, to do as thou wouldest be done to, to wrong no man anywise, to consider and tender the case of other men as thine own: thy designs are honest and moderate, conducible to (or at least consistent with) the public good, injurious or hurtful to no man; thou carriest on thy designs by fair ways, by a modest care and harmless diligence; nor canst be drawn to use any other, how seemingly needful soever, which do savour of fraud, violence, any sort of wrong or baseness: thou hast an honest pride and haughtiness of mind, which will not let thee condescend to use those sly tricks, crooked ways and shifts, which commonly are the compendious and most effectual ways of accomplishing designs here: thou art, in fine, (like Helvidius Priscus,) in thy dealings and proceedings, *pervicax recti*, wilfully and *peevishly honest*; such an one perhaps thou art, and such is thy way; and canst thou hope to be any body, or get any thing here? shall such a superstitious fop, such a conscientious simple- SERM. XL.

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ton, such a bashful sneaksby, so fantastic a philosopher pretend to any thing here? No: thou art here *piscis in arido*, quite out of thy element; this world is not for *thee* to thrive in.

Τὸ τῷ ἤθει γαληνόν τε καὶ ἄτεχνον καὶ πρὸς τὰς τῆς βίου στροφὰς ταύτας ἀνεπιτήδειον. *Naz. Ep.* 63.

This world is for worldlings to possess and enjoy: *It was*, say the Rabbins, *made for the presumptuous;* and although God did not altogether design it for them, yet men have almost made it so: they are best qualified to thrive in it, who can lustily bustle and scramble; who can fiercely swagger and huff; who can fawn: who can wind and wriggle like a serpent; who can finely cog and gloze; who can neatly shuffle and juggle; who can shrewdly overreach and undermine others; those slippery wily artists, who can veer any whither with any wind; those men of impregnable confidence, who can insist upon any pretences; who can be indefatigably and irresistibly urgent, nor will be repulsed or baffled by any means; those who have a temper so lax and supple, that they can bend it to any compliance advantageous to them; who have a spirit so limber, that they can stretch it any whither; who have face enough, and conscience little enough to do any thing; who have no certain principles, but such as will sort with their interests; no rules but such Lesbian and leaden ones, that easily may be accommodated to their purposes; whose designs all tend to their own private advantage, without any regard to the public, or to the good of others; who can use any means conducible to such designs, boggling at nothing which serveth their purpose; not caring what they say, be it true or false; what they do, be it right or wrong, so it seem profitable: this is called wisdom, prudence, dexterity, ability, knowledge of men and of the world, and I know not what beside; in the Scripture, the *wisdom of the world*, and *of the flesh*, *craft*, *guile*, *deceit*, κυβεία, &c. For such persons it is to flourish in this world: *Behold, these*, saith the Psalmist, *are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, and who increase in riches; they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men; their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than*

Quod facilimum factu est, pravus, et callidus bonos et modestos anteibat. *Tac. Hist.* 1.

Ἐφιάλτης στρατηγὸν εἰσαντος αὐτῷ τὴν πενίαν, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον, ἔφη, διὰ τί σὺ λέγεις; ὅτι δίκαιός εἰμι. *Æl.* xiii. 39.

Psal. lxxiii. 12, 5, 7.

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heart could wish: they it is who love the world, who seek it, who study and labour for it, who spend all their time, and employ all their care about it; and is it not fit they should have it? Is it not a pity they should miss it? Is it not natural, that they *who sow to the flesh, should reap from the flesh?* Should not they who use the proper means obtain the end? Should not they arrive at the place, who proceed in the direct road thither? 1 John ii. 16.

But for thee, who canst not find in thy heart to use the means, why dost thou hope to compass the end, or grieve for not attaining it? Why dost thou blend and jumble such inconsistencies together, as the eager desires of this, and the hopes of another world? It becometh not such a gallant to whine and pule. If thou wilt be brave, be brave indeed; singly, and thoroughly; be not a double-hearted mongrel; think not of satisfying thy mind, and driving on other interests together; of enjoying the conceit of being an honest man, with the design of being a rich or great man; of arriving to the happiness of the other world, and attaining prosperity in this. Wouldest thou enjoy both these? what conscience is there in that? Leave rather this world unto those who are more fit for it, who seem better to deserve it, who venture so much, and take such pains for it; do not go to rob them of this slender reward; but with content see them to enjoy the fruits of their labour and hazard: be thou satisfied with the consequences of thy virtuous resolutions and proceedings: if it be worth thy while to live innocently, modestly, and conscientiously, do it, and be satisfied; spoil not thine expectations by repining at the want of those things, which thy circumstances render incompatible with them: follow effectually the holy Patriarchs and Apostles, who, without regret, forsook all, and cheerfully went thither, whither conscience and duty called them: if thou art not willing to do so, why dost thou pretend to the same principles, or hope for the like rewards? But, leaving the consideration of the world as man hath made it, consider that this world is not, in its nature, or design, a place of perfect ease and convenience, of pure delight and satisfaction. What is this world but a 1 Cor. x. 13. Πειρατήριόν ἐστιν ὁ βίος τῶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐπὶ γῆς. Job vii. 1. *Chrys. ad Stag.* 2. (p. 106.)

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region of tumult and trouble; a theatre of vanity and disasters; the kingdom of care, of fear, of grief, and pain; of satiety, of disappointment, of regret and repentance? we came not hither to do our will, or enjoy our pleasure; we are not born to make laws for ourselves, or to pick our condition here: no, this world is a place of banishment from our first country, and the original felicity we were designed to; this life is a state of travel toward another *better country*, and seat of rest; and well it is, in such cases, (well it is, I say, for us, as exiles and travellers,) if we can find any tolerable accommodation, if we can make any hard shift: it should not be strange to us, if in this our perigrination we do meet with rough passages, foul ways, hard lodging, scant or coarse fare; if we complain of such things, we do not surely consider where we are, whence we came, whither are we going; we forget that we are the sons of Adam, the heirs of sin and sorrow, who have forfeited our rest and joy upon earth; we consider not, how unavoidable the effects are of that fatal condemnation and curse, which followed our first transgression; we mind not that the perfection and purity of the blessings we have lost is not to be found on this side the celestial paradise [m]. This world is purposely made somewhat unpleasant to us, lest we should overmuch delight in it, be unwilling to part with it, wish to set up our rest here, and say, *Bonum est esse hic, It is good for us to be here.*

Οὐ νενομοθετηκότες ἥλθομεν εἰς τὸν βίον, &c *Plut. ad Apollon.*

This life is a state of probation and exercise, like to that (which prefigured and represented it) of God's people in the wilderness, wherein God *leadeth us* through many difficulties and hazards, in many wants and hardships, to *humble and prove us*, in order to the fitting us for another more happy state [n].

Deut. viii. 23.

* Ἱλαρισμὸς ἡμᾶς ἐκ εἰλικρινεῖ μὴ ἀνθρωπινος. 1 Cor. x. 13. Eccl. xl. 1. Ἀσχολία ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c.

No temptation therefore (or affliction) *can seize upon us, but such as is human**; that is, such as is natural and proper

[m] Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐπίπονον φύσει, καὶ μοχθηρὸν ἡμῶν τὸν βίον κατεσκεύαζεν, ἵνα ὑπὸ ἐνταῦθα συναθέμενοι θλίψεως, ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν μελλόντων λάβωμεν· εἰ γὰρ νῦν, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. 5.

[n] Λογίζεσθαι χρὴ, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τῶν ἐπάθλων, καὶ τῶν στεφάνων καιρὸς, ὁ μέλλων ἐστὶν, αἰών· τῶν δὲ παλαισμάτων καὶ τῶν ἱδρώτων παρῶν. *Chrys. ad Stagir.* 2.

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to men; it is the consideration which St. Paul useth, to comfort and support us in troubles; and a plainly good one it is: for seeing *man*, as Eliphaz saith, *is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward*; that nothing is more natural to any thing, than trouble is to us; if we are displeased therewith, we are in effect displeased that we are men; it implieth that we gladly would put off our nature, and cease to be ourselves; we grieve that we are come to live in this world; and as well might we be vexed that we are not angels, or that we are not yet in heaven, which is the only place exempt from inconveniences and troubles, where alone *there is no sorrow, no clamour, no pain.*

Job. v. 7. Vid. Max. Tyr. diss. 25. p. 244. It was the doom of man to eat his bread in sorrow all the days of his life. Gen. iii. 17. Eccl. i. 14. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. Apoc. xxi. 4.

It hath always been, and it will ever be, an universal complaint and lamentation, that the life of man and trouble are individual companions, continually and closely sticking one to the other; that life and misery are but several names of the same thing; that our state here is nothing else but a combination of various evils, (made up of cares, of labours, of dangers, of disappointments, of discords, of disquiets, of diseases, of manifold pains and sorrows;) that all ages, from wailing infancy to querulous decripitness, and all conditions, from the careful sceptre to the painful spade, are fraught with many great inconveniences peculiar to each of them; that all the face of the earth is overspread with mischiefs as with a general and perpetual deluge; that nothing perfectly sound, nothing safe, nothing stable, nothing serene is here to be found: this with one sad voice all mankind resoundeth; this our poets are ever moanfully singing, this our philosophers do gravely inculcate; this the experience of all times loudly proclaimeth: for what are all histories but continual registers of the evils incident to men? what do they all describe, but wars and slaughters, mutinies and seditions, tumults and confusions, devastations and ruins? what do they tell us, but of men furiously striving together, circumventing, spoiling, destroying one another? what do we daily hear reported, but cruel broils, bloody battles, and tragical events; great numbers of men slain, wounded, hurried into captivity; cities sacked and rased, countries harassed and

Ὁ βίος ἀλη-θῶς ὁ βίος, ἀλλὰ ξυμφορά. Βίος γὰρ ὄνομ' ἔχει, πόνος δ' ἔργῳ πέλει. *Eurip.*

Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri? *Aug.*

Πλείη μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν, πλείη δὲ θάλασσα. *Hesiod.*

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depopulated; kingdoms and commonwealths overturned? what do we see before us but men carking, toiling, bickering; some worn out with labour, some pining away for want, some groaning under pain? And amidst so many common miseries and misfortunes, in so generally confused and dismal a state of things, is it not ridiculously absurd for us, doth it not argue in us a prodigious fondness of self-love, heinously to resent, or impatiently to bemoan our particular and private crosses [o]? May not reasonably that expostulation of Jeremy to Baruch reach us? *The Lord saith thus, Behold, that which I have built I will break down; and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not; for behold I will bring evil on all flesh.*

Jer. xlv. 4, 5.

4. Again, if we more closely and particularly survey the states of other men, (of our brethren everywhere, of our neighbours all about us,) and compare our case with theirs, our condition hardly can appear to us so bad, but that we have many consorts and associates therein; many as ill, many far worse bestead than ourselves. How many of our brethren in the world may we observe conflicting with extreme penury and distress; how many undergoing continual hard drudgeries to maintain their lives; how many sorely pinched with hunger and cold; how many tortured with grievous sickness; how many oppressed with debt; how many shut up under close restraint; how many detained in horrible slavery; how many by the wasting rage of war rifled of their goods, driven from their homes, dispossessed of all comfortable subsistence? How many, in fine, passing their lives in all the inconveniences of rude, beggarly, sordid, and savage barbarism? And who of us have, in any measure, tasted of these, or of the like calamities? Yet are these sufferers, all of them, the same in nature with us; many of them (as reason, as humility, as

[o] Ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes
Nemo recuset. *Sen. Troad.*
Ideo mihi videtur rerum naturæ, quod gravissimum fecit, commune fecisse, ut crudelitatem fati consolaretur æqualitas. *Sen. ad Polyb.* 21.

charity do oblige us to believe) deserve as well, divers of them much better than ourselves: what reason then can we have to conceive our case so hard, or to complain thereof? Were we the only persons exposed to trouble, or the single marks of adverse fortune; could we truly say with the Prophet, *Behold, if there be any sorrow like my sorrow;* we might seem a little unhappy: but since we have so much good company in our conceived woe; since it is so ordinary a thing to be poor and distressed; since *our case is*, as the Poet speaketh, *not rare, but commonly known, trite, and drawn out from the heap of lots offered to men by fortune* [p]; since pitiful objects do thus environ and enclose us; it is plainly reasonable, humane, and just, that we should without murmuring take and bear our lot: for what privilege have we to allege, that we rather than others should be untouched by the grievances to which mankind is obnoxious? Whence may we pretend to be the special favourites, minions, privadoes, and darlings of fortune? Why may not God well deal with us, as he doth with other men? what grounds have we to challenge, or to expect, that he should be partial toward us? why should we imagine, that he must continually do miracles in our behalf, causing all those evils, which fall upon our neighbours all about, to skip over us, bedewing us, like Gideon's *fleece*, with plenty and joy, while all the earth beside is dry; causing us, like the *three children*, to walk in this wide furnace, unscorched and unsinged by the flames encompassing us? Are we not men framed of the same mould, are we not sinners guilty of like offences, with the meanest peasant, the poorest beggar, the most wretched slave? if so, then a parity of fortune with any men doth become us, and may be due to us; then it is a perverse and unjust frowardness to be displeased with our lot: we may, if we please, pity the common state of men, but we

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Lam. i. 12.

Judg. vi. 37.

Dan. iii. 25.

[p] ——— Nec rara videmus
Quæ pateris: casus multis hic cognitus ac jam
Tritus, et e medio fortunæ ductus acervo. *Juv. Sat.* xiii. 8.
Te nunc delicias extra communia censes
Ponendum, &c. *Juv. Sat.* xiii. 140.

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cannot reasonably complain of our own; doing so plainly doth argue, that we do unmeasurably overprize and overlove ourselves. When once a great king did excessively and obstinately grieve for the death of his wife, whom he tenderly loved, a philosopher, observing it, told him, "That "he was ready to comfort him by restoring her to life, "supposing only, that he would supply what was needful "toward the performing it." The king said, "He was "ready to furnish him with any thing," The philosopher answered, "That he was provided with all things neces- "sary, except one thing:" what that was the king demanded; he replied, *That if he would upon his wife's tomb inscribe the names of three persons, who never mourned, she presently would revive:* the king, after inquiry, told the philosopher, That he could not find one such man: *Why then, O absurdest of all men,* said the philosopher, smiling, *art thou not ashamed to moan as if thou hadst alone fallen into so grievous a case; whenas thou canst not find one person, that ever was free from such domestic affliction* [q]? So might the naming one person, exempted from inconveniences, like to those we undergo, be safely proposed to us as a certain cure of ours; but if we find the condition impossible, then is the generality of the case a sufficient ground of content to us; then may we, as the wise poet adviseth, *solace our own evils by the evils of others,* so frequent and obvious to us.

Παηγόρει τὰ κακὰ δι' ἑτέρων κακῶν. *Menand.*

Nulli ad aliena respicienti sua placent. *Sen. de Ira,* lib. 31.

5. We are indeed very apt to look upward toward those few, who, in supposed advantages of life, (in wealth, dignity, or reputation,) do seem to transcend, or to precede us, grudging and repining at their fortune; but seldom do we cast down our eyes on those innumerably many good people, who lie beneath us in all manner of accommodations, pitying their mean or hard condition [r]; like racers, we look forward, and pursue those who go before

[q] Ἔτι ὦ πάντων ἀποπώτατε θρηνεῖς ἀναίδην, ὡς μόνος ἀλγεινῶ τοσούτῳ συμπλακείς, ὁ μηδὲ ἕνα τῶν πώποτε γεγονότων ἄμοιρον οἰκείᾳ πάθῃς ἔχων εὑρεῖν. *Jul. Ep.* 38.

[r] —— Neque se majori pauperiorum
Turbæ comparet; hunc atque hunc superare laboret:
Ut cum carceribus, &c. *Hor. Sat.* 1.

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us, but reflect not backward, or consider those who come behind us: two or three outshining us in some slender piece of prosperity, doth raise dissatisfaction in us; while the doleful state of millions doth little affect us with any regard or compassion: hence so general discontent springeth, hence so few are satisfied with their condition [s], an epidemical eyesore molesting every man: for there is no man, of whatsoever condition, who is not in some desirable things outstripped by others; none is so high in fortune, but another, in wit or wisdom, in health, or strength, or beauty, in reputation or esteem of men, may seem to excel him: he therefore looking with an *evil* or envious *eye* on such persons, and with senseless disregard passing over the rest of men, doth easily thereby lose his ease and satisfaction from his own estate: whereas if we would consider the case of most men, we should see abundant reason to be satisfied with our own; if we would a little feel the calamities of our neighbours, we should little resent our own crosses; a kindly commiseration of others' more grievous disasters would drown the sense of our lesser disappointments.

If with any competent heedfulness we view persons and things before us, we shall easily discern, that what absolutely seemeth great and weighty is indeed comparatively very small and light; that things are not so unequally dispensed, but that we have our full share in good, and no more than our part in evil [t]; that Socrates had reason to suppose, that, *if we should bring into one common stock all our mishaps, so that each should receive his portion of them, gladly the most would take up their own, and go their ways;* that consequently it is both iniquity and folly in us to complain of our lot.

Εἰ συνενέγκαιμεν εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τὰς ἀτυχίας, ὥστε διελέσθαι τὸ ἴσον ἕκαστον, ἀσμένως ἂν τὰς πλείους τὰς αὑτῶν λαβόντας ἀπελθεῖν. *Plut. Apoll.*

[s] Inde fit ut nemo, qui se vixisse beatum,
Dicat, &c. *Hor. Sat.* 1.

Si vis gratus esse adversus Deos, et adversus vitam tuam, cogita quam multos antecesseris. *Sen. Ep.* 15.

Nunquam erit felix, quem torquebit felicior. *Sen. de Ira.* iii. 31. *Vid. ib.*

[t] That at worst we are, Extremi primorum, extremis usque priores. *Hor. Epist.* ii. 2.

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6. If even we would take care diligently to compare our state with the state of those whom we are most apt to admire and envy, it would afford matter of consolation and content unto us. What is the state of the greatest persons, (of the world's princes and grandees,) what but a state encompassed with snares and temptations numberless; which, without extreme caution and constancy, force of reason, and command of all appetites and passions, cannot be avoided, and seldom are? What but a state of pompous trouble, and gay servility; of living in continual noise and stir, environed with crowds and throngs; of being subject to the urgency of business and the tediousness of ceremony; of being abused by perfidious servants and mocked by vile flatterers; of being exposed to common censure and obloquy, to misrepresentation, misconstruction, and slander; having the eyes of all men intent upon their actions, and as many severe judges as watchful spectators of them; of being accountable for many men's faults, and bearing the blame of all miscarriages about them; of being responsible, in conscience, for the miscarriages and mishaps which come from the influence of our counsels, our examples, &c. of being pestered and pursued with pretences, with suits, with complaints, the necessary result whereof is to displease or provoke very many, to oblige or satisfy very few; of being frequently engaged in resentments of ingratitude, of treachery, of neglects, of defects in duty, and breaches of trust toward them; of being constrained to comply with the humours and opinion of men; of anxious care to keep, and jealous fear of losing all; of danger and being objected to the traitorous attempts of bold malecontents, of fierce zealots, and wild fanatics; of wanting the most solid and savoury comforts of life, true friendship, free conversation, certain leisure, privacy, and retiredness, for enjoying themselves, their time, their thoughts, as they think good; of satiety and being cloyed with all sorts of enjoyments: in fine, of being paid with false coin for all their cares and pains, receiving for them scarce any thing more, but empty shews of respect, and

Magna servitus est magna fortuna, &c. *Sen. ad Polyb.* 26.

hollow acclamations of praise[t]; (whence the Psalmist might well say, *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie;* a lie, for that their state cheateth us, appearing so specious, yet being really so inconvenient and troublesome.) Such is the state of the greatest men; such as hath made wise princes weary of themselves, ready to acknowledge, that if men knew the weight of a crown, none would take it up[u]; apt to think with Pope Adrian, who made this epitaph for himself: *Here lieth Adrian the Sixth, who thought nothing in his life to have befallen him more unhappy, than that he ruled*[x]: such, in fine, their state, as upon due consideration we should, were it offered to our choice, never embrace; such indeed, as in sober judgment, we cannot prefer before the most narrow and inferior fortune; how then can we reasonably be displeased with our condition, when we may even pity emperors and kings, when, in reality, we are as well, perhaps are much better, than they? SERM. XL. Psal. lxii. 9. Nihil difficilius quam bene imperare. *Diocles. apud Vopisc. in Aureliano.*

7. Farther, it may induce and engage us to be content, to consider what commonly hath been the lot of good men in the world: we shall, if we survey the histories of all times, find the best men to have sustained most grievous crosses and troubles[y]; scarce is there in holy Scripture recorded any person eminent and illustrious for goodness, who hath not tasted deeply of wants and distresses. *Abraham, the father of the faithful*, and especial *friend of God*, was called out of his country, and from his kindred, to wander in a strange land, and lodge in tents, without any fixed habitation. Jacob spent a great part of his life

[t] Personata felicitas. *Sen. Ep.* 80.

——— Adulandi certamen est, et unum omnium amicorum officium, una contentio quis blandissime fallat. *Sen. de Benef.* vi. 30.—Vid. optime differentem.—Vid. et de Clem. i. 19.—Et ad Polyb. 26.

[u] Antigonus. Nescitis amici, quid mali sit imperare, &c. *Saturn. apud Vopisc.*

[x] Hic situs est Adrianus VI. qui nihil sibi in vita infelicius duxit, quam quod imperavit. *Lud. Guicciard. P. Jovius in vit.*

[y] Consider what calamities great, powerful, glorious men have endured; Crœsus, Polycrates, Pompey, &c. *Sen. de Ira*, iii. 25.

Οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄριστοι πενία διέζων παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον. (Aristides, Phocion, Epaminondas, Pelopidas.) *Æl.* xi. 9, 11, 43. Lamachus, Socrates, Ephialtes. Abel, Noe, &c. *Chrys.* tom. vi. p. 107.

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in slavish toil, and in his old age was, in reflection upon his life, moved to say, *that the days of his pilgrimage had been few and evil.* Joseph was maligned and persecuted by his brethren, sold away for a slave, slandered for a most heinous crime, thrust into a grievous prison, where *his feet were hurt with fetters, and his soul came into iron.* Moses was forced to fly away for his life, to become a vagabond in a foreign place, to feed sheep for his livelihood; to spend afterward the best of his life in contesting with an obstinately perverse prince, and in leading a mistrustful, refractory, mutinous people, for forty years' time, through a vast and wild desert. Job, what a stupendous heap of mischiefs did together fall and lie heavy upon him? (*Thou writest bitter things against me*, he might well say.) David, how often was he plunged in saddest extremity, and reduced to the hardest shifts; being *hunted like a partridge in the wilderness* by an envious master, forced to counterfeit madness for his security among barbarous infidels; dispossessed of his kingdom, and persecuted by his own most favoured son; deserted by his servants, reproached and scorned by his subjects [y]? Elias was driven long to sculk for his life, and to shift for his livelihood in the wilderness. Jeremy was treated as an impostor and a traitor, and cast into a miry dungeon; finding matter from his sufferings for his doleful lamentations, and having thence occasion to exclaim, *I am the man that have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath, &c. Which of the Prophets were not persecuted* and misused? as St. Stephen asked. The Apostles were pinched with all kinds of want, harassed with all sorts of toil, exposed to all manner of hazards, persecuted with all variety of contumelies and pains that can be imagined: above all, our Lord himself beyond expression was *a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief*, surpassing all men in suffering as he did excel them in dignity and

Gen. xlvii. 9.
Ps. cv. 18. Σίδηρον διῆλθεν ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ.
Socrates, Cato, Regulus, Phocion, &c. Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit. Vid. Chrys. tom. v. Or. 27. p. 168. et tom. vi. Or. 10. p. 107.
Job xiii. 27.
1 Sam. xxvi. 20.
Lam. iii. 1.
Acts vii. 52.
1 Cor. iv. and vii.
Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 93.
Isa. liii. 3.

[y] Νῦν καὶ πάλαι ἐξ ἧς γεγόνασιν ἄνθρωποι ἅπαντες οἱ τῷ Θεῷ φίλοι τῷ συγγνῷ καὶ ἐπιμόχθῳ ᾗ μυρίων γήμοντι δεινῶν ἐκληρώθησαν βίῳ. *Chrys. in Mart. Ægypt.* t. v. 522.

Ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς ἤνθων οἱ δίκαιοι, τοὺς ἁγίους ἅπαντας ὅτως ἤγαγεν ὁ Θεὸς διὰ θλίψεως. *Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or.* 27.

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in virtue; extreme poverty, *having not so much as where to lay his head*, was his portion; to undergo continual labour and travel, without any mixture of carnal ease or pleasure, was his state; in return for the highest good-will and choicest benefits, to receive most cruel hatred and grievous injuries, to be loaded with the bitterest reproaches, the foulest slanders, the sorest pains which most spiteful malice could invent, or fiercest rage inflict, this was his lot: *Am I poor?* so, may one say, was he to extremity; Am I slighted of the world? so was he notoriously; Am I disappointed and crossed in my designs? so was he continually, all his most painful endeavours having small effect; Am I deserted or betrayed of friends? so was he by those who were most intimate, and most obliged to him; Am I reviled, slandered, misused? Was not he so beyond all comparison most outrageously?

Matt. viii. 20.

Ἐκ γὰρ τῶν πρώτων φύντων ἀνθρώπων μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος καιροῦ τὰς τῶν ὅλων ὑπερβαλλούσας συμφορὰς εἶχεν ὁ θεῖος ἰδεῖν παρὰ τῶν συμβιούντων ἀνθρώπων ἠδικημένους, καὶ πλείστοις ἄγαν περιπεπτωκότας ἀνιαροῖς. *Theod. Ep.* 132.

Have all these, and many more, of *whom the world was not worthy*, undergone all sorts of inconvenience, being *destitute, afflicted, tormented*; and shall we then disdain, or be sorry to be found in such company? *Having such a cloud of martyrs, let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* Is it not an honour, should it not be a comfort to us, that we do, in condition, resemble them? If God hath thus dealt with those, who of all men have been dearest to him, shall we take it ill at his hands, that he, in any manner, dealeth so with us? Can we pretend, can we hope, can we even wish to be used better, than God's first-born, and our Lord himself hath been? If we do, are we not monstrously fond and arrogant; especially considering, that it is not only an ordinary fortune, but the peculiar character of God's chosen, and children, to be often crossed, checked, and corrected; even Pagans have observed it, and avowed there is great reason for it: *God*, saith Seneca, *hath a fatherly mind toward good men; and strongly loveth them—therefore after the manner of severe parents, he educateth them hardly, &c.* The Apostle doth in express terms assure us thereof; for, *whom*, saith he, *the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with*

Heb. xi. 38.

Heb. xii. 1.

Sen. de Provid. c. 2.

Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8.

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you as with sons——but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all (that is, all good men, and genuine sons of God) *are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.* Would we be illegitimated, or expunged from the number of God's true children; would we be divested of his special regard and good-will? if not, why do we not gladly embrace, and willingly sustain adversity, which is by himself declared so peculiar a badge of his children, so constant a mark of his favour? if *all* good *men* do as the Apostle asserteth, *partake thereof;* shall we, by displeasure at it, shew that we desire to be assuredly none of that party, that we affect to be discarded from that holy and happy society? *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.* It is peculiarly the lot of Christians, as such, in conformity to their afflicted Saviour; they are herein *predestinated to be conformable to his image; to this they are appointed. (Let no man,* saith St. Paul, *be moved by these afflictions, for ye know, that we are appointed thereunto:)* to this they are called, *(if when ye do well,* saith St. Peter, *and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called,)* this is propounded to them as a condition to be undertaken and undergone by them as such; they are by profession *crucigeri*, bearers of the cross; *(*if any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me; every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution;)* by this are they admitted into the state of Christians; *(by many afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heaven;)* this doth qualify them for enjoying the glorious rewards, which their religion propoundeth; *(we are co-heirs with Christ;* so that, *if we suffer together, we shall also together be glorified with him; if we endure we shall also reign with him* [z]*:)* and shall we then pretend to be Christians, shall

Ecclus. ii. 2. Τέκνον, εἰ προσέρχῃ δουλεύειν κυρίῳ, ἑτοίμασον τὴν ψυχήν σου εἰς πειρασμόν.

John xvi. 20.

Rom. viii. 29. 1 Thess. iii. 3. Phil. iii. 10.

1 Pet. ii. 20, 21. * Matt. xvi. 24. x. 38. 2 Tim. iii. 12. John xvi. 33. Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλῖψιν ἔξετε. Quotam partem angustiarum perpessus sum qui crucimilito. *Hier. ad A. scl. Ep.* 99. Acts xiv. 22. Vid Greg. Naz. Ep. 201. (ad Theclam.) 2 Tim. ii. 12. (Phil. iii. 10.)

[z] It is a privilege of Christians, in favour bestowed on them; ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη. Phil. i. 29.

Our glory, Eph. iii. 13.

Ὑπομονῆς ἔχετε χρείαν. Heb. x. 36.

Faith and patience are consorts. Heb. vi. 12. Apoc. xiii. 10.

we claim any benefit from thence, if we are unwilling to submit to the law, to attend the call, to comply with the terms thereof? Will we enjoy its privileges, can we hope for its rewards, if we will not contentedly undergo what it requireth? Shall we arrive to the end it propoundeth, without going in the way it prescribeth, the way which our Lord himself doth lead us in, and himself hath trod before us? SERM. XL.

In fine, seeing adversity is, as hath been declared, a thing so natural to all men, so common to most men, so incident to great men, so proper to good men, so peculiar to Christians, we have great reason to observe the Apostle's advice, *Beloved, wonder not concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you as if some strange thing happened to you;* we should not wonder at it as a strange or uncouth thing, that we are engaged in any trouble or inconvenience here; we are consequently not to be affected with it as a thing very grievous. 1 Pet. iv. 12.

SERMON XLI.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

I have learned in whatever state I am, &c.

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MOREOVER, considering the nature of this duty itself, may be a great inducement and aid to the practice of it.

1 Tim. vi. Ἔστι δὲ μέγας πορισμὸς ἡ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας. Aug. de Civ. Dei, i. 8.

1. It is itself a sovereign remedy for all poverty and all sufferance; removing them, or allaying all the mischief they can do us. It was well and truly said by St. Austin, *Interest non qualia, sed qualis quis patiatur; It is no matter what, but how disposed a man suffereth:* the chief mischief any adversity can do us is to render us discontent; in that consisteth all the sting and all the venom thereof; which thereby being avoided, adversity can singify nothing prejudicial or noxious to us; all distraction, all distemper, all disturbance from it is by the antidote of contentedness prevented or corrected. He that hath his desires moderated to a temper suitable with his condition, that hath his passions composed and settled agreeably to his circumstances, what can make any grievous impression on him, or render him anywise miserable? he that taketh himself to have enough, what doth he need? he that is well pleased to be as he is, how can he be better? what can the largest wealth, or highest prosperity in the world, yield more or better than satisfaction of mind? he that hath this most essential ingredient of felicity, is he not thence in effect most

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fortunate? is not at least his condition as good as that of the most prosperous [a]?

2. As good, do I say? yea, is it not plainly much better than can arise merely from any secular prosperity? for satisfaction springing from rational consideration and virtuous disposition of mind, is indeed far more precious, more noble and worthy, more solid and durable, more sweet and delectable, than that which any possession, or fruition of worldly goods can afford [b]: the τὸ ἄφθαρτον τῦ πραέος, καὶ ἡσυχίε πνεύματος, *incorruptibility*, as St. Peter speaketh, *of a meek and quiet spirit is before God of great price; before God*, that is, according to the most upright and certain judgment, it is the most precious and valuable thing in the world; *There is*, the philosopher could say, *no spectacle more worthy of God*, (or grateful to him,) *than a good man gallantly combating with ill fortune.* Not to be discomposed or distempered in mind, not to fret or whine, when all things flow prosperously and according to our mind, is no great praise, no sign of wisdom, or argument of goodness; it cannot be reckoned an effect of sound judgment or virtuous affection, but a natural consequent of such a state: but when there are evident occasions and urgent temptations to displeasure, when present sense and fancy do promp and provoke to murmuring, then to be satisfied in our mind, then to keep our passions in order, then to maintain good humour, then to restrain our tongue from complaint, and to govern our demeanour sweetly, this is indeed honourable and handsome; to see a worthy man sustain crosses, wants, disgraces, with equanimity and cheerfulness, is a most goodly sight: such a person, to a judicious mind, appeareth in a far more honourable and invidious state, than any prosperous man; his virtue shining in the dark is far more

Vid. Ep. 6. et ad Olymp. Epist. Epist. 3. (p. 75.) de Josepho. 1 Pet. iii. 4. Ecce par Deo dignum vir bonus cum mala fortuna compositus *Sen. de Provid.*

[a] Cui cum paupertate bene convenit, dives est. *Sen. Ep.* 2.

Nemo aliorum sensu miser est, sed suo; et ideo non possunt cujusquam falso judicio esse miseri, qui sunt vere conscientia sua beati. Nulli beatiores sunt, quam qui hoc sunt quod volunt. *Salv. de Gubern. Dei*, 1.

[b] Οὐ γὰρ τὸ ποιῆσαί τι χρηστὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ τὸ παθεῖν τι κακὸν πολλὰς ἔχει τὰς ἀμοιβὰς καὶ μεγάλα τὰ ἔπαθλα, &c. *Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep.* 3. *Vid.* p. 73.

Οὐδὲν τῆς ἐν ἀλγηδόσιν ὑπομονῆς εἰς εὐδοκιμήσεως λόγον ἴσον· ἡ γὰρ βασιλὶς τῶν ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τῶν στεφάνων ἡ κορωνὶς αὕτη μάλιστά ἐστι. *Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep.* 16.

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bright and fair: *this*, as St. Peter saith, in a like case, *is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God suffereth grief;* if in our case, (we may say after him,) a man, out of conscientious deference to God's will, doth contentedly undergo adversity, this, God is ready to take for an obligation on himself, and will be disposed in a manner to *thank him* (or to reward him) for it: this indeed amounteth to a demonstration, that such a person is truly wise and really good: so is the satisfaction of a contented poor man more worthy [c]: and it is no less more sweet and comfortable, than that of any rich man, pleasing himself in his enjoyments; contentedness satisfieth the mind of the one, abundance doth only satiate the appetites of the other; the former is immaterial and sprightly, the complacence of a man; the latter is gross and dull, like the sensuality of a beast; the delight of that sinketh deep into the heart, the pleasure of this doth only float in the outward senses, or in the fancy; one is a positive comfort, the other but a negative indolency in regard to the mind: the poor good man's joy is wholly his own, and home-born, a lovely child of reason and virtue; the full rich man's pleasure cometh from without, and is thrust into him by impulses of sensible objects.

1 Pet. ii. 19.

Hence is the satisfaction of contented adversity far more constant, solid, and durable, than that of prosperity; it being the product of immutable reason, abideth in the mind, and cannot easily be driven thence by any corporeal impressions, which immediately cannot touch the mind; whereas the other, issuing from sense, is subject to all the changes inducible from the restless commotions of outward causes affecting and altering sense; whence the satisfaction proceeding from reason and virtue, the longer it stayeth the firmer and sweeter it groweth, turning into habit, and working nature to an agreement with it; whereas usually the joys of wealth and prosperity do soon degenerate into fas-

[c] Honesta res est læta paupertas. *Epic.*

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ διὰ τὸν Θεόν τι πάσχων μόνον εὐδοκιμεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ἀδίκως τι πάσχων, καὶ φέρων γενναίως, καὶ εὐχαριστῶν τῷ συγχωρῆσαντι Θεῷ ἐκ ἐλάττων τοῦ διὰ τὸν Θεὸν ταῦτα πάσχοντός ἐστιν. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. ς'.

tidiousness, and terminate in bitterness; being *honey in the mouth*, but soon becoming *gall in the bowels*. Nothing indeed can affect the mind with a truer pleasure, than the very conscience of discharging our duty toward God in bearing hardship, imposed by his providence, willingly and well. We have therefore much reason not only to acquiesce in our straits, but to be glad of them, seeing they do yield us an opportunity of immediately obtaining goods more excellent and more desirable, than any prosperous or wealthy man can easily have, since they furnish us with means of acquiring and exercising a virtue worth the most ample fortune; yea, justly preferable to the best estate in the world; a virtue, which indeed doth not only render any condition tolerable, but sweeteneth any thing, yea sanctifiet all states, and turneth all occurrences into blessings. SERM. XLI. Apoc. x. 10. Job xx. 20, 23.

3. Even the sensible smart of adversity is by contentedness somewhat tempered and eased; the stiller and quieter we lie under it, the less we feel its violence and pungency: it is tumbling and tossing that stirreth the ill-humours, and driveth them to the parts most weak and apt to be affected with them; the rubbing of our sores is that which inflameth and exasperateth them: where the mind is calm, and the passions settled, the pain of any grievance is in comparison less acute, less sensible.

4. Whence, if others in our distress are uncharitable to us, refusing the help they might or should afford toward the rescuing us from it, or relieving us in it, we hereby may be charitable and great benefactors to ourselves; we should need no anodyne to be ministered from without, no succour to come from any creature, if we would not be wanting to ourselves, in hearkening to our own reason, and enjoying the consolation which it affordeth. In not doing this, we are more uncharitable and cruel to ourselves, than any spiteful enemy or treacherous friend can be; no man can so wrong or molest us, as we do ourselves, by admitting or fostering discontent.

5. The contented bearing of our condition is also the most hopeful and ready means of bettering it, and of removing the pressures we lie under.

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It is partly so in a natural way, as disposing us to embrace and employ the advantages which occur conducible thereto: for as discontent blindeth men, so that they cannot descry the ways of escape from evil, it dispiriteth and discourageth them from endeavouring to help themselves, it depriveth them of many succours and expedients, which occasion would afford for their relief; so he that being undisturbed in his spirit hath his eyes open and his courage up, and all his natural powers in order, will be always ready and able to do his best, to act vigorously, to snatch any opportunity, and employ any means toward the freeing himself from what appeareth grievous to him.

Upon a supernatural account, content is yet more efficacious to the same purpose; for cheerful submission to God's will doth please him much, doth strongly move him to withdraw his afflicting hand, doth effectually induce him to advance us into a most comfortable state: of all virtues, there is none more acceptable to God than patience. God will take it well at our hands if we do contentedly receive from his hand the worst things: it is a monstrous thing not to receive prosperity with grateful sense, but it is heroical with the same mind to receive things unpleasant: he that doth so ζημιᾶται μὲν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, στεφανᾶται δὲ ὡς φιλόθεος, *he suffereth loss as a man, but is crowned as a lover of God.* Besides that, it is an unreasonable thing to think of enjoying both rest and pleasure here, and the rewards hereafter; our consolation here with Dives, and our refreshment hereafter with Lazarus.

Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 89.

Vid. Chrys. ad Stag. 1. et 2. (p. 106.)

Be humbled, saith St. Peter, *under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,* (ἐν καιρῷ, when it is opportune and seasonable;) and, *Be humbled,* saith St. James, *before the Lord, and he will exalt you;* and, *When* saith Job's friends, *men are cast down, then thou shalt say there is lifting up, and he will save the humble person.* God with favourable pity hearkeneth to the groans of them who are *humbly contrite* under his hand, and reverently *tremble at his word;* he *reviveth the spirit of the humble;* he *is nigh to the broken of heart,* and *saveth such as are of a contrite spirit; he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth*

1 Pet. v. 6.

Jam. iv. 10.

Job xxii. 29. (Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14.)

Isa. lxvi. 2. lvii. 15. Psal. xxxiv. 18. li. 17. cxlvii. 3.

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up their wounds; he proclaimeth *blessedness to the poor in spirit*, and *to those that mourn*, because they shall find comfort and mercy: all which declarations and promises are made concerning those who bear adversity with a submiss and contented mind; and we see them effectually performed in the cases of Ahab, of the Ninivites, of Nebuchadnezzar, of Manasses, of Hezekiah, of David; of all persons mentioned in holy Scripture, upon whom adversities had such kindly operations. But discontent and impatience do offend God, and provoke him to continue his judgments, yea to increase the load of them: to be sullen and stubborn, is the sure way to render our condition worse and more intolerable: for, *who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?* The Pharaohs and Sauls, and such like persons, who rather would break than bend, who, being dissatisfied with their condition, chose rather to lay hold on other imaginary succours, than to have recourse to God's mercy and help; those, who (like the refractory Israelites) have been *smitten in vain* as to any quiet submission or conversion unto God, what have they but plunged themselves deeper into wretchedness?

Matt. v. 3, 4.

Job ix. 4. Jer. ii. 30. v. 3. Isa. ix. 13. i. 5. xxvi. 10.

It is indeed to quell our haughty stomach, to check our froward humour, to curb our impetuous desires, to calm our disorderly passions, to suppress our fond admiration and eager affection toward these worldly things, in short, to work a contented mind in us, that God ever doth inflict any hardships on us, that he crosseth us in our projects, that he detaineth us in any troublesome state; until this be achieved, as it is not expedient that we should be eased, as relief would really be no blessing to us; so God (except in anger and judgment) will nowise grant or dispense it; it would be a cruel mercy for him to do it. If therefore we do wish ever to be in a good case as to this world, let us learn to be contented in a bad one: having got this disposition firmly rooted in our hearts, we are qualified for deliverance and preferment; nor will God fail in that due season to perform for us what he so often hath declared and promised; his nature disposeth him, his word hath engaged him to help and comfort us.

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These are the most proper inducements unto contentedness, which, considering (in the light of reason and holy Scripture) the nature of the thing, suggested unto my meditation: there are beside some other means advisable, (some general, some more particular,) which are very conducible to the production of content, or removing discontent; which I shall touch, and then conclude.

1. A constant endeavour to live well, and to maintain a good conscience: he that doth this can hardly be dismayed or disturbed with any occurrence here; this will yield a man so ample and firm a satisfaction of mind, as will bear down the sense of any incumbent evils; this will beget such hope in God, and so good assurance of his favour, as will supply the want of all other things, and fully satisfy us, that we have no cause to be troubled with any thing here; he that by conscientious practice hath obtained such a hope, is prepared against all assaults of fortune with an undaunted mind and force impregnable; *He will*, as the Psalmist saith, *not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* Maintaining this will free us from all anxious care, transferring it upon God; it will breed a sure confidence, that he will ever be ready to supply us with all things convenient, to protect and deliver us from all things hurtful; ensuring to us the effect of that promise, by the conscience of having performed the condition thereof: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Ps. cxii. 1. cxix. 6.

Matt. vi. 33.

This was that which supported the Apostles and kept them cheerful under all that heavy load of distresses which lay upon them; *Our rejoicing is this*, could they say, *the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity—we have had our conversation in this world.*

1 Cor. i. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 16. Acts xxiii. 1. xxiv. 16.

It is the want of this best pleasure, that both rendereth the absence of all other pleasures grievous, and their presence insipid; had we a good conscience, we could not seem to want comfort; as we could not truly be unhappy, so we could hardly be discontent; without it, no affluence of other things can suffice to content us. It is an evil conscience that giveth an edge to all other evils, and enableth

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them sorely to afflict us, which otherwise would but slightly touch us; we become thence uncapable of comfort, seeing not only things here upon earth to cross us, but heaven to lower upon us; finding no visible succour, and having no hope from the power invisible; yea having reason to be discouraged with the fear of God's displeasure. As he that hath a powerful enemy near cannot abide in peace, without anxious suspicion and fear, so he that is at variance with the Almighty, who is ever at hand, ready to cross and punish him, what quiet of mind can he enjoy? *There is no peace to the wicked.*

2. The contemplation of our future state is a sovereign medicine to work contentedness and to cure discontent; as discontent easily doth seize upon, and cleaveth fast to souls, which earnestly do pore and dote upon these present things, which have in them nothing satisfactory or stable; so if we can raise our minds firmly to believe, seriously to consider, and worthily to prize the future state and its concernments, we can hardly ever be discontent in regard to these things. Considering heaven and its happiness, how low and mean, how sordid and vile, how unworthy of our care and our affection, will these inferior things appear! how very unconcerned shall we see ourselves to be in them, and how easily thence shall we be content to want them! What, shall any of us be then ready to say, doth it concern me in what rank or garb I pass my few days here? what considerable interest can I have in this uncertain and transitory state? what is any loss, any disgrace, any cross in this world to me, who am a citizen of heaven, who have a capacity and hope of the immense riches, the incorruptible glories, the perfect and endless joys of eternity? This was that which sustained the holy Apostles in all their distresses; *For this cause*, saith St. Paul, *we faint not—while we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal:* and, *I reckon*, saith he again, *that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

1 Thess. iv. 18. Vid. Naz. Ep. 201. (ad Theclam.)

2 Cor. vii. 31.

2 Cor. iv. 16, &c. v. 7.

Rom. viii. 18.

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If likewise we do with faith and seriousness consider the dismal state below of those, who are eternally secluded from all joy and bliss, who are irrecoverably condemned to utter darkness and the extremity of horrible pain, how tolerable, how pleasant, how very happy will the meanest state here appear to be? how vain a thing will it then seem to us to be to dislike, or to be troubled with any worldly thing; to account any chance happening to us to be sad or disastrous? What, shall we say then, each of us, is this same loss to the loss of my soul and all its comforts for ever? what is this want to the perpetual want of heavenly bliss? what is this short and faint pain to the cruel pangs of endless remorse, to the *weeping and gnashing of teeth in outward darkness, to everlasting burnings?*

Thus infinitely silly and petty must all concernments of this life appear to him, who is possessed with the belief and consideration of matters relating to the future state; whence discontent, in regard to them, can hardly find access to his mind.

3. Constant devotion is an excellent instrument and guard of content, an excellent remedy and fence against discontent.

It is such in way of impetration, procuring the removal or alleviation of our crosses: for God hath promised that *he will give good things to those that ask him; The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth; he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The poor man crieth, and the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of all his troubles;* the holy Scripture is full of such declarations and promises, assuring us of succour from our distresses upon our supplication to God; whence St. Paul thus adviseth against all solicitude: *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God: and* (addeth, signifying the consequence of this practice) *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.*

Matt. vii. 11. Psal. cxlv. 18. Jam. iv. 8. Psal. xxxiv. 6. cvii. 6.

Phil. iv. 7. (Psal. xxv. 16. lxxxvi. 1, 4, 17. xliv. 23.)

It likewise performeth the same by procuring grace and

aid from God, which may enable and dispose us to bear all evils well, which is really much better than a removal of them; for that hence they become wholesome and profitable to us, and causes of present good, and grounds of future reward: thus, when St. Paul *besought God* for deliverance from his thorn in the flesh, the return to him was; *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness:* it was a greater favour to receive an improvement of spiritual strength, occasioned by that cross, than to be quite freed from it. SERM. XLI. 2 Cor. xii. 9. 1 Cor. x. 13.

Devotion also hath immediately of itself a special efficacy to produce content. As in any distress it is a great consolation, that we can have recourse to a good friend, that we may discharge our cares and our resentments into his bosom; that we may demand advice from him, and, if need be, request his succour; so much more it must be a great comfort, that we can in our need approach to God, who is infinitely the most faithful, the most affectionate, the most sufficient friend that can be; always most ready, most willing, most able, to direct and to relieve us: he desires and delights, that *in the day of our trouble we should seek him;* that *we should pour forth our hearts before him;* that we should *cast our burdens and our cares upon him;* that we should, upon all occasions, implore his guidance and aid: and complying with his desires, as we shall assuredly find a successful event of our devotions, so we shall immediately enjoy great comfort and pleasure in them. Psal. lxxvii. 2. xxvii. 8. cv. 4. lxii. 8. 1 Sam. i. 15. Psal. lv. 22. 1 Pet. v. 7. Psal. v. 8. xxvii. 11. xxxi. 3.

The *God of all consolation* doth especially by this channel convey his comforts into our hearts; his very presence (that *presence*, in which the Psalmist saith *there is fulness of joy*) doth mightily warm and cheer us; his Holy Spirit doth, in our religious intercourse with him, insinuate a lightsome serenity of mind, doth kindle sweet and kindly affections, doth scatter the gloomy clouds of sadness; practising it, we shall be able to say with the Psalmist, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.* xliii. 3. cxxxix. 24. cxliii. 10. lxi. 2. Jer. xxxi. 9. Psal. xvi. 11. Psal. xciv. 19.

Humbly addressing ourselves to God, and reverently conversing with him, doth compose our minds and charm

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our passions, doth sweeten our humour, doth refresh and raise our spirits, and so doth immediately breed and nourish contentedness.

It also strengtheneth our faith, and quickeneth our hope in God, whereby we are enabled to support our present evils, and peace of mind doth spring up within us.

Isa. xxvi. 3.

Psal. lxxiii. 26. lxix. 16. xxiii. 4. lxxi. 20.

It inflameth our love unto God, in sense of his gracious illapses, thence rendering us willing to endure any want or pain for his sake, or at his appointment.

It, in fine, doth minister a ravishing delight, abundantly able to supply the defect of any other pleasures, and to allay the smart of any pains whatever; rendering thereby the meanest estate more acceptable and pleasant, than any prosperity without it can be. So that if we be truly devout, we can hardly be discontent; it is discosting from God, by a neglect of devotion or by a negligence therein, that doth expose us to the incursions of worldly regret and sorrow.

These are general remedies and duties both in this and all other regards necessary, the which yet we may be induced to perform in contemplation of this happy fruit (contentedness) arising from them. Farther,

4. It serveth toward production of contentedness to reflect much upon our imperfection, unworthiness, and guilt; so as thereby to work in our hearts a lively sense of them, and a hearty sorrow for them: this will divert our sadness into its right channel, this will drown our lesser grief by the influx of a greater. It is the nature of a greater apprehension or pain incumbent to extinguish in a manner, and swallow up the sense of a lesser, although in itself grievous; as he that is under a fit of the stone doth scarce feel a pang of the gout: he that is assaulted by a wolf will not regard the biting of a flea. Whereas then, of all evils and mischiefs, moral evils are incomparably far the greatest, in nature the most ugly and abominable, in consequence the most hurtful and horrible; seeing, in St. Chrysostom's language, *excepting sin, there is nothing grievous or terrible among human things: not poverty, not sickness, not disgrace, not that which seemeth the*

Οὐδὲν δεινὸν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, ἀλλ' ἡ ἁμαρτία μόνη. ὃ πε-

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most extreme of all evils, death itself; those being names only among such as philosophate, names of calamity, void of reality; but the real calamity this, to be at variance with God, and to do that which displeaseth him; seeing evidently, according to just estimation, no evil beareth any proportion to the evil of sin, if we have a due sense thereof we can hardly be affected with any other accident; if we can keep our minds intent upon the heinous nature and the lamentable consequences of sin, all other evils cannot but seem exceedingly light and inconsiderable; we cannot but apprehend it a very silly and unhandsome thing to resent or regard them: what, shall we then judge, is poverty, in comparison to the want of a good conscience? what is sickness, compared to distemper of mind and decay of spiritual strength? what is any dissappointment to the being defeated and overthrown by temptation? what any loss, to the being deprived of God's love and favour? what any disgrace, to the being out of esteem and respect with God? what any unfaithfulness or inconstancy of friends, to having deserted or betrayed our own soul? what can any danger signify to that of eternal misery, incurred by offending God? what pressure can weigh against the load of guilt, or what pain equal that of stinging remorse? in fine, what condition can be so bad as that of a wretched sinner? any case surely is tolerable, is desirable, is lovely and sweet, in comparison to this: would to God, may a man in this case reasonably say, that I were poor and forlorn as any beggar; that I were covered all over with botches and blains as any Lazar; that I were bound to pass my days in an hospital or a dungeon; might I be chained to an oar, might I lie upon the rack, so I were clear and innocent: such thoughts and affections, if reflecting on our sinful doings and state do suggest and impress, what place can there be for resentment of other petty crosses?

νία, ὐ νόσος, ὐχ ὕβρις, ὐκ ἐπκρία, ὐκ ἀντιμία, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. ε'. 6. Vid. ad Olymp. Ep. 13. ad Theod. 1.

Contrition also upon this score is productive of a certain sweetness and joy, apt to quash or to allay all worldly grief: as *it worketh a salutary repentance not to be repented of,* so it therewith breedeth a satisfactory comfort, which

2 Cor. vii. 10. Vid. Chrys. ad Demet. et ad Stelletch. tom. 6.

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doth ever attend repentance: he that is very sensible of his guilt, cannot but consequently much value the remedy thereof, mercy; and thence earnestly be moved to seek it; then, in contemplation of divine goodness, and considering God's gracious promises, will be apt to conceive faith and hope, upon his imploring mercy, and resolution to amend; thence will spring up a cheerful satisfaction, so possessing the heart, as to expel or to exclude other displeasures: a holy and a worldly sadness cannot well consist together.

5. Another good instrument of contentedness is sedulous application of our minds to honest employment. Honest studies and cares divert our minds, and drive sad thoughts from them: they cheer our spirits with wholesome food and pleasant entertainments; they yield good fruits, and a success accompanied with satisfaction, which will extinguish or temper discontent: while we are studious or active, discontent cannot easily creep in, and soon will be stifled.

Idleness is the great mother and the nurse of discontent: it layeth the mind open for melancholy conceits to enter; it yieldeth harbour to them, and entertainment there; it depriveth of all the remedies and allays which business affordeth.

Mater me genuit.

Reciprocally, discontent also begetteth idleness, and by it groweth; they are like ice and water, arising each out of the other: we should therefore not suffer any sadness, so to encroach upon us, as to hinder us from attending to our business, (the honest works and studies of our calling,) for it thereby will grow stronger and more hardly vincible.

Ἀγαθὴ δὲ παραίφασις ἑταίρου ἐστίν.

6. A like expediment to remove discontent is good company. It not only sometimes ministereth advices and arguments for content, but raiseth the drooping spirit, erecting it to a loving complaisance, drawing it out towards others in expressions of kindness, and yielding delight in those which we receive from others, infecting us by a kind of contagion with good humour, and instilling pleasant ideas into our fancy, agreeably diverting us from sad and irksome thoughts: discontent affecteth re-

tirement and solitude, as its element and food; good company partly starveth it by smothering sad thoughts, partly cureth it by exhilarating discourse. No man hardly can feel displeasure, while friendly conversation entertaineth him; no man returneth from it without some refreshment and ease of mind. SERM. XLI.

7. Having right and lowly conceits of ourselves is a most sure guardian and procurer of content; for answerable to a man's judgment of himself are his resentments of the dealing he meeteth with from God or man. He that thinks meanly as he ought of himself, will not easily be offended at any thing: any thing, will he think, is good enough for me; I deserve nothing from God, I cannot deserve much of man; if I have any competence of provision for my life, any tolerable usage, any respect, it is more than my due, I am bound to be thankful: but he that conceiteth highly (that is, vainly) of himself, nothing will satisfy him; nothing, thinks he, is good enough for him, or answerable to his deserts; nobody can yield him sufficient respect; any small neglect disturbeth and enrageth him; he cannot endure that any man should thwart his interest, should cross his humour, should dissent from his opinion; hence, seeing the world will not easily be induced to conceit of him as he doth of himself, nor to comply with his humours and pretences, it is impossible that he should be content.

8. It conduceth to this purpose to contemplate and resent the public state of things, the interest of the world, of our country, of God's church. The sense of public calamities will drown that of private, as unworthy to be considered or compared with them; the sense of public prosperity will allay that of particular misfortune. How (will a wise and good man say) can I desire to prosper and flourish, while the state is in danger or distress? How can I grieve, seeing my country is in good condition? Is it just, is it handsome, that I should be a nonconformist either in the public sorrow or joy? Indeed,

9. All hearty charity doth greatly alleviate discontent. If we bear such a good-will to our neighbour, as to have a

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sincere compassion of his evils and complacence in his good, our case will not much afflict us. If we can appropriate and enjoy the prosperity, the wealth, the reputation, of our neighbour, by delighting in them, what can we want; what can displease us. If our heart is enlarged in pity for the misfortunes of others, it cannot be contracted with grief for our own: our sorrow, like water, being thus diffused, cannot be so deep, but it will be more fruitful; it will produce such effects as will comfort and please us; it is a stingy selfishness which maketh us so very sensible of crosses and so uncapable of comfort.

10. Again, if we will attain contentment, we must take heed of setting our affection upon any worldly thing whatever so as very highly to prize it, very passionately to affect it, very eagerly to pursue it; so as to conceive our happiness in any measure to hang on it or stick thereto: if there be any such thing, we shall be disappointed in the acquist or the retention of it; or we shall be dissatisfied in its enjoyment.

So to adhere in affection to any thing is an adulterous disloyalty toward our Maker and best Friend, from which it is expedient that we should be reclaimed; whence God, in just anger or in kind mercy, will be apt to cross us in our attempts to get it, or to deprive us of its possession; whence the displeasure will follow, which always attendeth a separation from things we love. But if we be suffered to obtain or retain it, we shall soon find dissatisfaction therein; being either disgusted with some bitterness in it, (such as doth lurk in every sensible good,) or being cloyed with its lusciousness; it, after a small enjoyment, will become either distasteful or insipid.

This, according to continual experience, is the nature of all things, pleasant only to sense or fancy, presently to satiate; no beauty can long please the eye, no melody the ear, no delicacy the palate, no curiosity the fancy; a little time doth waste away, a small use doth wear out the pleasure, which at first they afford: novelty commendeth and ingratiateth them; distance representeth them fair and lovely; the want or absence of them rendereth them desirable; but

the presence of them dulleth their grace, the possession of them deadeneth the appetite to them. SERM. XLI.

New objects with a gentle and grateful touch warble upon the corporeal organs, or excite the spirits into a pleasant frisk of motion; but when use hath levigated the organs, and made the way so smooth and easy that the spirits pass without any stop, those objects are no longer felt, or very faintly; so that the pleasure ceaseth.

Only those things which reason (religious and sound reason) doth approve, do yield a lasting (undecaying, unalterable) satisfaction; if we set our affections on them, we cannot fail of content: in seeking them, we cannot be disappointed; for God (without any reservation or exception) hath promised to bestow them upon those who seriously and diligently seek them: nor can we be dispossessed of them; God will not take them away, and they lie beyond the reach of any other hand: having them, then, we cannot but fully and durably be satisfied in the fruition of them; the longer we have them, the more we shall like them; the more we taste them, the better we shall relish them: time wasteth not, but improveth the sense of their unfading beauty and indefectible sweetness.

11. It is of great influence toward contentedness with an earnest and impartial regard to contemplate things as they are in themselves, divested of tragical appearances, in which they are wrapt by our own inconsiderate fancy, or which vulgar prejudices do throw upon them: as all things, looked upon by the corporeal eye through a mist, do seem bigger than in reality they are; so to the eye of our mind all things (both good and evil) seem hugely enlarged, when viewed through the fogs of our dusky imagination, or of popular conceit. If we will esteem that very good, which with a gay appearance dazzleth our imagination, or which the common admiration and applause of men recommendeth, the most vain and worthless, the most dangerous, the most mischievous things often will appear such: and if we please to account those things greatly bad, which look ugly or horridly to imagination, which are defamed by the injudicious

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part of men, or which men commonly do loathe, do fret at, do wail for, we shall take the best, most innocent, most useful, most wholesome things for such; and accordingly these errors of our minds will be followed by a perverse practice, productive of dissatisfaction and displeasure to us. No man ever will be satisfied, who values things according to the price which fancy setteth on them, or according to the rate they bear in the common market; who distinguisheth not between good and famous, bad and infamous; who is affected accordingly with the want of those things, which men call good, with the presence of those, which they term bad.

But if we judge of things as God declareth, as impartial and cautious reason dictateth, as experience diligently observed (by their fruits and consequences) discovereth them to be, we shall have little cause to be affected by the want or presence of any such thing which is wont to produce discontent.

12. We should to this purpose take especial care to search out through our condition, and pick thence the good that is therein, making the best we can of it, enjoying and improving it; but what is inconvenient or offensive therein declining it, diminishing it, tempering it so well as we may, always forbearing to aggravate it. There are in nature divers simples, which have in them some part or some juice very noxious, which being severed and cast away, the rest becometh wholesome food; neither indeed is there any thing in nature so venomous, but that from it, by art and industry, may be extracted somewhat medicinal and of good use when duly applied; so in most apparent evils lieth enclosed much good, which if we carefully separate, (casting away the intermixed dross and refuse,) we shall find benefit, and taste comfort thence; there is nothing so thoroughly bad, as, being well ordered and opportunely ministered, will not do us much good: so if from poverty we cast away or bear quietly that which a little pincheth the sense or grateth on the fancy, and enjoy the undistractedness of mind, the liberty, the leisure, the health, the security from envy, obloquy, strife, which

it affordeth, how satisfactory may it become to us? The like conveniences are in disgrace, disappointment, and other such evils, which being improved may endear them to us: even sin itself (the worst of evils, the only true evil) may yield great benefits to us; it may render us sober and lowly in our own eyes, devout in imploring mercy, and thankful to God for it; merciful and charitable toward others in our opinions and censures; more laborious in our good practice, and watchful over our steps: and if this deadly poison well administered yieldeth effects so exceedingly beneficial and salutary, what may other harmless (though unhandsome and unpleasant) things do, being skilfully managed?

13. It is a most effectual means of producing content and curing discontent, to rouse and fortify our faith in God, by, with most serious attention, reflecting upon the arguments and experiments, which assure us concerning God's particular providence over all, over us. It is really infidelity (in whole, or in part, no faith, or a small and weak faith) which is at the root, as of all sin, so particularly of discontent: for how is it possible, did we firmly believe, and with any measure of attention consider that God taketh care of us, that he tendereth our good, that he is ready at hand to succour us, (how then, I say, is it possible,) that we should fear any want, or grievously resent any thing incident? But we, like St. Peter, are ὀλιγόπιστοι, *of little faith*, therefore we cannot *walk on the sea;* but in despair sink down: sometimes our faith is buried in oblivion or carelessness; we forget, or mind not that there is a Providence; but look on things as if they fell out casually or fatally; thence expect no redress from heaven, so tumble into despair and disconsolateness. Sometimes, because God doth not in our time and our way relieve us or gratify us, we slip into profane doubt, questioning in our hearts whether he doth indeed regard us, or whether any relief is to be expected from him; not considering that only God can tell when and how it is best to proceed; that often it is not expedient our wishes should be granted; that we are not

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wise enough or just enough to appoint or choose for ourselves; that it is impossible for God to gratify every man; that it would be a mad world, if God in his government thereof should satisfy all our desires.

We forget how often God hath succoured us in our needs and straits, how continually he hath provided for us, how patiently and mercifully he hath borne with us, what miracles of bounty and mercy he hath performed in our behalf; we are like that distrustful and inconsiderate people, who *remembered not the hand of God, nor the day when he delivered them; remembered not the multitude of his mercies;* but *soon forgat his works, and waited not for his counsel; They forgat God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things in the Red Sea.*

Psa. lxxviii. 42. Psal. cvi. 7, 13, 21.

From such dispositions in us our discontents do spring; and we cannot cure them, but by recollecting ourselves from such forgetfulness and negligence; by shaking off such wicked doubts and distrusts; by fixing our hearts and hopes on him, who alone can help us; who is *our strength, the strength of our heart, of our life, of our salvation.*

Psal. xxii. 19. xlvi. 1. lxxxi. 1. lix. 7. cxliv. 1. Psal. lxxiii. 26. xxvii. 1. cxl. 7.

Of him (to conclude) let us humbly implore, that he in mercy would bestow upon us grace to submit in all things to his will, to acquiesce in all his dispensations, gladly to embrace and undergo whatever he allotteth to us; in every condition, and for all events befalling us, heartily to adore, thank, and bless him: even so to the ever blessed God, our gracious Maker and Preserver, be eternally rendered all glory, thanksgiving, and praise. Amen.

SERMON XLII.

OF PATIENCE.

1 Pet. ii. 21.

Because also Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps.

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In these words two things appear especially observable; a duty implied, (*the duty of patience*) and a reason expressed, which enforceth the practice of that duty, (*the example of Christ.*) We shall, using no more preface or circumstance, first briefly, in way of explication and direction, touch the duty itself, then more largely describe and urge the example.

The word *patience* hath, in common usage, a double meaning, taken from the respect it hath unto two sorts of objects, somewhat different. As it respecteth provocations to anger and revenge by injuries or discourtesies, it signifieth a disposition of mind to bear them with charitable meekness; as it relateth to adversities and crosses disposed to us by Providence, it importeth a pious undergoing and sustaining them. That both these kinds of patience may here be understood, we may, consulting and considering the context, easily discern: that which immediately precedeth, *If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God*, relateth to good endurance of adversity; that which presently followeth, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not*, referreth to meek comporting with provocations: the text therefore, as it looketh back-

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ward, doth recommend the patience of adversities, as forward, the patience of contumelies. But seeing both these objects are reducible to one more general, comprising both, that is, things seeming evil to us, or offensive to our sense, we may so explicate the duty of patience, as to include them both.

Patience then is that virtue, which qualifieth us to bear all conditions and all events, by God's disposal incident to us, with such apprehensions and persuasions of mind, such dispositions and affections of heart, such external deportments and practices of life, as God requireth and good reason directeth. Its nature will, I conceive, be understood best by considering the chief acts which it produceth, and wherein especially the practice thereof consisteth; the which briefly are these:

1. A thorough persuasion, that nothing befalleth us by fate, or by chance, or by the mere agency of inferior causes, but that all proceedeth from the dispensation, or with the allowance of God; that *affliction doth not come forth of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground;* but that all, both *good and evil, proceedeth out of the mouth of the Most High*, according as David reflected when Shimei reviled him: *Let him*, saith the good king, *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David;* and as Job, when he was spoiled of all his goods, acknowledged, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*

Job v. 6. Lam. iii. 38. 2 Sam. xvi. 10. Job i. 21.

2. A firm belief, that all occurrences, however adverse and cross to our desires, are well consistent with the justice, wisdom, and goodness of God; so that we cannot reasonably disapprove, repine at, or complain of them; but are bound and ready to avow with the Psalmist, that *all his paths are mercy and truth; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;* to judge and say with Hezekiah, *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken;* to confess with David unto him, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*

Psal. xxv. 10. cxlv. 17. 2 Kings xx. 19. Psal. cxix. 75.

3. A full satisfaction of mind, that all, (even the most bitter and sad accidents) do (according to God's purpose)

tend and conduce to our good; acknowledging the truth of those divine aphorisms: *Happy is the man whom God correcteth; whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* Job v. 17. Jam. i. 12. Prov. iii. 12 Heb. xii. 5. Rev. iii. 19.

4. An entire submission and resignation of our wills to the will of God, suppressing all rebellious insurrections and grievous resentments of heart against his providence; which may dispose us heartily to say after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done;* with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* with David, *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him;* yea, even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be.* Luke xxii. 42. 1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Sam. xv. 26.

5. Bearing adversities calmly, cheerfully, and courageously, so as not to be discomposed with anger or grief; not to be put out of humour, not to be dejected or disheartened; but in our disposition of mind to resemble the primitive saints, who were ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, *as grieved, but always rejoicing;* who *took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,* who *accounted it all joy when they fell into divers tribulations.* 2 Cor. vi. 10. Heb. x. 34. Jam. i. 2.

6. A hopeful confidence in God for the removal or easement of our afflictions, and for his gracious aid to support them well; agreeable to those good rules and precepts: *It is good that a man should both hope, and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord; Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart;* according to the pattern of David, who, in such a case, thus roused and stayed himself: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance;* and after the holy Apostles, who in their most forlorn estate could say, *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.* Lam. iii. 26. Psal. xxxvii. 7. xxvii. 14. Psal. xlii. 6. 2 Cor. iv. 8.

7. A willingness to continue, during God's pleasure, in our afflicted state, without weariness or irksome longings for alteration; according to that advice of the Wise Man:

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My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction; and that of the Apostle, backed with our Lord's example, *Considering him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.*

Prov. iii. 11.

Heb. xii. 3.

8. A lowly frame of mind (that is, being sober in our conceits of ourselves, sensible of our unworthiness and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury, and wretchedness; of our manifold defects and miscarriages in practice; being meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirit; being deeply affected with reverence and dread toward the awful majesty, mighty power, perfect justice and sanctity of God; all this) wrought by our adversity, effectually, according to its design, quelling our haughty stomach, softening our hard hearts, mitigating our peevish humours; according to St. Peter's injunction, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;* and God's own approbation joined with a gracious promise, *To this man will I look; even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

1 Pet. v. 6.

Ezek. lxvi. 2.

9. Restraining our tongues from all discontentful complaints and murmurings, all profane, harsh, unsavoury expressions, importing displeasure or dissatisfaction in God's dealings toward us, arguing desperation or distrust in him; such as were those of the impatient and incredulous Israelites: *They spake against God, and said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?* Such as they used, of whom the Prophet said, *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King, and their God;* such as they were guilty of, whom St. Jude calleth γογγυσὰς, καὶ μεμψιμοίρους, *murmurers, and querulous persons,* (or such as found fault with their lot,) that which is styled, *charging God foolishly;* for abstaining from which, notwithstanding the pressure of his most grievous calamities, Job is commended, (where it is said, *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly;*) that which the Prophet condemneth as unreasonable in that

Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20.

Isa. viii. 21.

Jude 16.

Job i. 22.

expostulation, *Wherefore doth the living man complain?* In such cases we should smother our passions in a still and silent demeanour, as the Psalmist advised, and as he practised himself: *I was dumb*, saith he, *and opened not my mouth, because it was thy doings.* Yea, contrariwise, patience requireth. SERM. XLII. Lam. iii. 39. Ps. xxxviii. 7. xlvi. 10. iv. 4. Ps. xxxix. 9.

10. Blessing and praising God, (that is, declaring our hearty satisfaction in God's proceedings with us, acknowledging his wisdom, justice, and goodness therein, expressing a grateful sense thereof, as wholesome and beneficial to us,) in conformity to Job, who, upon the loss of all his comforts, did thus vent his mind: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* Job i. 21.

11. Abstaining from all irregular and unworthy courses toward the removal or redress of our crosses; choosing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relax ourselves; contentedly wearing, rather than violently *breaking our yoke*, or *bursting our bonds;* rather continuing poor, than striving to enrich ourselves by fraud or rapine; rather lying under contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances attempting to gain the favour and respect of men; rather embracing the meanest condition, than labouring by any turbulent, unjust, or uncharitable practices, to amplify our estate; rather enduring any inconvenience or distress, than *setting our faces toward Egypt*, or having recourse to any succour which God disalloweth; according to what is implied in that reprehension of St. Paul, *Now therefore it is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another: Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* and in that advice of St. Peter, *Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* Jer. v. 5. Jer. xlii. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 19.

12. A fair behaviour toward the instruments and abettors of our affliction; those who brought us into it, or who detain us under it, by keeping off relief, or sparing to yield the succour which we might expect; the forbearing

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to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge, to retain any grudge or enmity toward them; but rather even upon that score bearing good-will, and shewing kindness unto them; unto them, not only as to our brethren, whom, according to the general law of charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, or as to the instruments of his pleasure toward us; considering that by maligning or mischiefing them, we do signify ill resentment of God's dealings with us, and in effect, through their sides, do wound his providence: thus did the pious king demean himself when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by Shimei; not suffering, upon this account, any harm or requital to be offered to him: thus did the holy Apostles, who *being reviled, did bless; being persecuted, did bear it; being defamed, did entreat:* thus did our Lord deport himself toward his spiteful adversaries, who *being reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered, did not threaten; but committed it to him that judgeth righteously.*

2 Sam. xvi. 7.

1 Cor. iv. 12.

1 Pet. ii. 23. iii. 9.

13. Particularly in regard to those, who, by injurious and offensive usage, do provoke us, patience importeth,

1. That we be not hastily, over-easily, not immoderately, not pertinaciously incensed with anger toward them, according to those divine precepts and aphorisms: *Be slow to wrath; be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Give place to wrath,* (that is, remove it.) *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Cease from anger, let go displeasure, fret not thyself anywise to do evil.*

Jam. i. 19. Eccles. vii. 9. Prov. xvi. 32. xiv. 17, 29. Rom. xii. 19. Eph. iv. 31, 26. Col. iii. 8.

2. That we do not in our hearts harbour any ill will, or ill wishes, or ill designs toward them, but that we truly desire their good, and purpose to further it, as we shall have ability and occasion, according to that law, (even charged on the Jews,) *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* and according to that noble command of our Saviour, *Love your enemies, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

Matt. v. 21, 24. Ps. xxxvii. 8. Levit xix. 18. Mat. v. 44. Luke vi. 27.

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3. That in effect we do not execute any revenge, or for requital do any mischief to them, either in word or deed; but for their reproaches exchange blessings, (or good words and wishes;) for their outrages, repay benefits and good turns; according to those evangelical rules: *Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you: Bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not: See that none render evil for evil: Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing: If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: Say not, I will do to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work: Say thou not, I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.* Matt. v. 44, 39. Rom. xii. 14. 1 Thess. v. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9. Prov. xxv. 21. Rom. xii. 20. Prov. xxiv. 29. xx. 22.

4. In fine, patience doth include and produce a general meekness and kindness of affection, together with an enlarged sweetness and pleasantness in conversation and carriage toward all men; implying that how hard soever our case, how sorry or sad our condition is, we are not therefore angry with the world, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; that we are not dissatisfied or disgusted with the prosperous estate of other men; that we are not become sullen or froward toward any man, because his fortune excelleth ours, but that rather we do *rejoice with them that rejoice;* we do find complacence and delight in their good success; we borrow satisfaction and pleasure from their enjoyments. Rom. xii. 15.

In these and the like acts, the practice of this virtue (a virtue which all men, in this state of inward weakness and outward trouble, shall have much need and frequent occasion to exercise) consisteth; unto which practice, even philosophy, natural reason, and common sense do suggest many inducements; the tenour of our holy faith and religion do supply more and better; but nothing can more clearly direct, or more powerfully excite thereto, than that admirable example, by which our text doth enforce it: some principal of those rational inducements we shall cursorily touch, then insist upon this example.

It will generally induce us to bear patiently all things

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incident, if we consider, that it is the natural right and prerogative of God to dispose of all things, to assign our station here, and allot our portion to us; whence it is a most wrongful insolence in us, by complaining of our state, to contest his right or impeach his management thereof: that we are obliged to God's free bounty for numberless great benefits and favours; whence it is vile ingratitude to be displeased for the want of some lesser conveniences: that God having undertaken and promised to support and succour us, it is a heinous affront to distrust him, and consequently to be dissatisfied with our condition: that seeing God doth infinitely better understand what is good for us than we can do, he is better affected toward us and more truly loveth us than we do ourselves, he with an unquestionable right hath an uncontrollable power to dispose of us; it is most reasonable to acquiesce in his choice of our state: that since we have no claim to any good or any pleasure, and thence in withholding any no wrong is done to us, it is unjust and frivolous to murmur or grumble; since we are, by nature, God's servants, it is fit the appointment of our rank, our garb, our diet, all our accommodations and employments in his family, should be left entirely to his discretion and pleasure; that we being grievous sinners, *less than the least of God's mercies*, meriting no good, but deserving sore punishment from him, it is just, that we should be highly content and thankful for any thing on this side death and damnation: that our afflictions being the natural fruits and results of our choice or voluntary miscarriages, it is reasonable we should blame ourselves rather than pick quarrels with Providence for them. That our condition, be it what it will, cannot, being duly estimated, be extremely bad or insupportably grievous; for that as no condition here is perfectly and purely good, (not deficient in some accommodations, not blended with some troubles,) so there is none that hath not its conveniences and comforts; for that it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which create the mischiefs adherent to any state; for that also how forlorn

soever our case is, we cannot fail, if we please, of a capacity to enjoy goods far more than countervailing all possible want of those goods, or presence of these evils; we may have the use of our reason, a good conscience, hope in God, assurance of God's love and favour, abundance of spiritual blessings here, and a certain title to eternal glory and bliss hereafter; which, if we can have, our condition cannot be deemed uncomfortable. That indeed our adversity is a thing very good and wholesome, very profitable and desirable, as a means of breeding, improving, and exercising the best virtues, of preparing us for and entitling us to the best rewards. That our state cannot ever be desperate; our adversity probably may not be lasting, (there being no connection between the present and the future, vicissitudes being frequent, all things depending on the arbitrary dispensation of God, who doth always pity us, and is apt to relieve us.) That, however, our affliction will not outlive ourselves, and certainly must soon expire with our life. That this world is not a place of perfect convenience, or pure delight; we come not hither to do our will, or enjoy our pleasure; we are not born to make laws, or pick our condition here; but that *trouble* is natural and proper to us (*we are born thereto, as the sparks fly upwards.*) *No tribulation seizeth us, but such as is human;* whence it is reasonable that we contentedly bear the crosses suitable to our nature and state. That no adversity is in kind or degree peculiar to us; but if we survey the conditions of other men, (of our brethren every where, of our neighbours all about us,) and compare our case with theirs, we shall find that we have many consorts and associates in adversity, most as ill, many far worse bestead than ourselves; whence it must be a great fondness and perverseness to be displeased that we are not exempted from, but exposed to bear a share in the common troubles and burdens of mankind. That it hath particularly been the lot of the best men (persons most excellent in virtue and most deep in God's favour) to sustain adversity; and it therefore becometh us willingly and cheerfully to accept it. That, in fine, patience itself

Job v. 7. 1 Cor. x. 13.

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is the best remedy to ease us in, to rescue us from adversity; for it cannot much annoy us, if we bear it patiently; God will, in mercy, remove it, if we please him, by demeaning ourselves well under it; but that impatience doth not at all conduce to our relief, doth indeed exasperate and augment our pain: such considerations may induce us to a patience in general respecting all sorts of evil.

There are also reasons particularly disposing to bear injuries and contumelies from men calmly and meekly, without immoderate wrath, rancorous hatred, or spiteful revenge toward them; because they do proceed from Divine Providence, disposing or permitting them (for the trial of our patience, the abasing our pride, the exercising of some other virtues, or for other good purposes) to fall upon us: because vindication of misdemeanours committed against us doth not appertain to us, we not being competent judges of them, nor rightful executors of the punishments due to them, God having reserved to himself the right of decision and power of execution; *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay it;* beccuse we are obliged to interpret charitably the actions of our neighbour, supposing his miscarriages to proceed from infirmity, from mistake, or from some cause, which we should be rather inclinable to excuse than to prosecute with hatred or revenge: because, indeed, our neighbour's most culpable offences, as issuing from distemper of mind, are more reasonably the objects of compassion and charity, than of anger or ill-will: because we are bound to forgive all injuries by the command of God, and in conformity to his example, who passeth by innumerable most heinous offences committed against himself; *Gracious is the Lord, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth;* so must we be also, if we will be like him or please him: because we ourselves, being subject to incur the same faults in kind, or greater in value, do need much pardon, and should thence be ready to allow it unto others, both in equity, and in gratitude toward God, lest that in the Gospel be applied to us; *O thou wicked servant, I forgave*

Rom. xii. 19.
Heb. x. 30.
Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.
Vid. Tert. de Pat. cap. 10.
Psal. cxlv. 8. lxxxvi. 15.
Matt. xviii. 25.

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thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? Because God hath made it a necessary condition of our obtaining mercy, promising us favour if we yield it, menacing us extremity if we refuse it; *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:* because our neighbour suffering by our revenge in any manner, (in his body, interest, or reputation,) doth not anywise profit us, or benefit our estate, but needlessly doth multiply and increase the stock of mischief in the world; yea, commonly doth bring farther evil upon ourselves, provoking him to go on in offending us, rendering him more implacably bent against us, engaging us consequently deeper in strife and trouble: because no wrong, no disgrace, no prejudice we can receive from men is of much consequence to us, if our mind be not disordered; if we are free from those bad passions, which really are the worst evils that can befal us: because, in fine, impatience itself is insignificant and ineffectual to any good purpose, or rather produceth ill effects; it doth not cure our wound, or assuage our grief; it removeth no inconvenience, nor repaireth any damage we have received, but rather inflameth our distemper and aggravateth our pain [a]; more really indeed molesting and hurting us, than the injury or discourtesy which causeth it. Thus, briefly, doth reason dictate to us the practice of all patience.

Matt. vi. 14. Eccl. viii. 2. Matt. xviii. 35. Mark xi. 25.

But the example proposed by the Apostle here, and otherwhere by St. Paul, (*Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*—) by the Apostle to the Hebrews, (*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*—) by our Lord himself, (*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly*—) that doth in a more lively manner express how in

Phil. ii. 5. Heb. xii. 1, 2. Matt. xi. 29.

[a] Idcirco quis te lædit ut doleas, quia fructus lædentis in dolore læsi est. *Tert. de Pat.* 8.

Si patientiæ incubabo, non dolebo, si non dolebo, ulcisci non desiderabo. *Ib.* 1.

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such cases we should deport ourselves, and most strongly engageth us to comply with duties of this nature. Let us now therefore describe it, and recommend it to your consideration.

Vid. Tertul. de Pat. c. 3. Cypr. de Pat. t. ii. p. 315. Isa. liii. 3.

The example of our Lord was indeed in this kind the most remarkable that ever was presented, the most perfect that can be imagined: he was, above all expression, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;* he did undertake, as to perform the best works, so to endure the worst accidents to which human nature is subject; his whole life being no other than one continual exercise of patience and meekness, in all the parts and to the utmost degrees of them. If we trace the footsteps of his life from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we shall not be able to observe any matter of complacence, scarce any of comfort (in respect to his natural or worldly state) to have befallen him.

His parentage was mean, to appearance; and his birth, in all exterior circumstances, despicable: *Is not this the carpenter's son?* were words of contempt and offence, upon all occasions thrown upon him.

Matt. xiii. 55. Mark vi. 3.

His life was spent not only in continual labour and restless travel, but in hard poverty; yea, in extreme penury, beneath the state not only of the meanest men, but of the most shifting beasts: *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*

Matt. viii. 20.

Matt. xxi. 18, 19. Nullius mensam, tectumve despexit. *Tert.*

For his necessary sustenance we find him often destitute of ordinary provision, (as when he sought food from the barren fig-tree,) often indebted for it to the courtesy and, as it were, alms of the vilest people, of *publicans and sinners:* so δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, *he was,* as the Apostle saith, *a beggar for us.*

2 Cor. viii. 9.

Yet may we never perceive him anywise discontented with, or complaining of his condition; not discouraged or depressed in spirit thereby, not solicitously endeavouring any correction or change thereof; but willingly embracing it, heartily acquiescing therein; and, notwithstanding all its inconveniencies, cheerfully discharging his

duties, vigorously pursuing his main designs of procuring glory to God and benefit to men. SERM. XLII.

Nor did he only with content undergo the incommodities of a poor estate, but he was surrounded with continual dangers; the most powerful men of those times, enraged with envy, ambition, and avarice, desperately maligning him, and being incessantly attentive, upon all occasions, to molest, hurt, and destroy him: *The world* (as he saith himself, that is, all the powerful and formidable part of the world) *hating me;* yet did not this anywise dismay or distemper him, nor cause him either to repine at his condition or decline his duty. He utterly disregarded all their spiteful machinations, persisting immoveable in the prosecution of his pious and charitable undertakings, to the admiration of those who observed his demeanour: *Is not this he,* said they, *whom they seek to kill? but lo, he speaketh boldly.* John xv. 18. John vii. 25.

He did indeed sometimes opportunely shun their fury, and prudently did elude their snares, but never went violently to repel them, or to execute any revenge for them; improving the wonderful power he was endued with altogether to the advantage of mankind, never to the bane or hurt of his malicious enemies. Luke iv. 30. Matt. xxi. 27. xxii. 18.

Sensible enough he was of the causeless hatred they bare him, (ἐμίσησάν με δωρεάν, *They,* said he, *have hated me for nothing,*) and of their extreme ingratitude; yet never could he be provoked to resent or requite their dealing: see how mildly he did expostulate the case with them; *Then,* saith St. John, *the Jews took up stones to stone him: Jesus answered them, Many good things have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those do ye stone me?* John xv. 25. John x. 31.

To be extremely hated and inhumanly persecuted, without any fault committed or just occasion offered, is greatly incensive of human passion; but for the purest and strongest good-will, for the most inexpressible beneficence, to be recompensed with most virulent reproaches, most odious slanders, most outrageous misusages—how exceeding was that meekness, which, without any signification of regret or disgust, could endure it!

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Out of the most tender charity and ardent desire of their salvation, he instructed them, and instilled heavenly doctrine into their minds; what thanks, what reward did he receive for that great favour? to be reputed and reported an impostor: πλανᾷ τὸν ὄχλον, *he*, said they, *doth impose upon the people.*

Matt. xxiii. 37.

John vii. 12

Matt. xxvii. 60.

He took occasion to impart the great blessing of pardon for sin to some of them, confirming his authority of doing it by a miraculous work of goodness; how did they resent such an obligation? by accounting him a blasphemer: *Behold*, saith St. Matthew, *certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth:* which most harsh and uncharitable censure of theirs he did not fiercely reprehend, but calmly discussed and refuted by a clear reasoning; τί ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὸν; *Wherefore conceive ye evil in your hearts? for whether is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk?* that is, Is it not credible that he who can perform the one may dispense the other?

Matt. ix. 3. &c.

Ingratos curavit, in sidiatoribus cessit. *Tert.*

He freed them from most grievous diseases, yea rescued them from the greatest mischief possible in nature, being possessed by the unclean fiend; how did they entertain this mighty benefit? by most horrible calumny, accusing him of sorcery or conspiracy with the devil himself. *The Pharisees said, He casteth out devils by the prince of the devils;* yea, thence attributing to him the very name and title of the grand devil: *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more* (shall they defame) *them of his household?* Yet this most injurious defamation he no otherwise rebuketh, than by a mild discourse, strongly confuting it; *Every kingdom*, said he, *divided against itself is brought to desolation—and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?* that is, the devil better understands his interest, than to assist any man in dispossessing himself.

Acts x. 38.

Matt. ix. 34. xii. 24.

Matt. x. 25.

Matt. xii. 25.

He did constantly labour in reclaiming them from error and sin, in converting them to God and goodness, in proposing fair overtures of grace and mercy to them, in shew-

ing them by word and practice the sure way to happiness: What issue was there of all his care and pains? What but neglect, distrust, disappointment, rejection of himself, of what he said, and what he did? *Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* was a prophecy abundantly verified by their carriage toward him. SERM. XLII. John xii. 38.

These, and the like usages, which he perpetually did encounter, he constantly received without any passionate disturbance of mind, any bitter reflections upon that generation, any revengeful enterprises against them; yea, requited them with continued earnestness of hearty desires, and laborious endeavours for their good.

We might observe the ingrateful disrespects of his own countrymen and kindred toward him, which he passeth over without any grievous disdain; rather excusing it, by noting that entertainment to have been no peculiar accident to himself, but usual to all of like employment; *No prophet*, said he, *is acceptable in his own country.* Luke iv. 24. Matt. xiii. 57.

We might also mention his patient suffering repulses from strangers; as when being refused admittance into a Samaritan village, and his disciples, being incensed with that rude discourtesy, would have fire called down from heaven to consume those churls [a], he restrained their unadvised wrath, and thus expressed his admirable meekness: *The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* Luke ix. 53, 56.

We might likewise remark his meek comporting with the stupid and perverse incredulity of his disciples, notwithstanding so many pregnant and palpable inducements continually exhibited for confirmation of their faith, the which he no otherwise than sometime gently admonisheth them of, saying, τί δειλοί ἐστε ὀλιγόπιστοι; *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* ὀλιγόπιστε, τί ἐδίσασας; *O thou of small faith, why didst thou doubt?* Luke ix. 41. Matt. xvii. 17. Non peccatores, non publicanos aspernatus est. *Tert.* Matt. viii. 26. xiv. 31.

What should I insist on these, although very remarkable

[a] Non illi saltem civitati quæ cum recipere noluerat iratus est, cum etiam discipuli tam contumelioso oppido cœlestes ignes repræsentari voluissent. *Tert.*

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instances? since that one scene of his most grievous (shall I say, or glorious) passion doth represent unto us a perfect and most lively image of the highest patience and meekness possible; of the greatest sorrow that ever was or could be, yet of a patience surmounting it; of the extremest malice that ever was conceived, yet of a charity overswaying it; of injury most intolerable, yet of a meekness willingly and sweetly bearing it: there may we observe the greatest provocations from all hands to passionate animosity of spirit and intemperate heat of speech, yet no discovery of the least disorderly, angry, or revengeful thought, the least rash, bitter, or reproachful word; but all undergone with clearest serenity of mind, and sweetness of carriage toward all persons.

To Judas, who betrayed him, how doth he address himself? Doth he use such terms as the man deserved, or as passion would have suggested, and reason would not have disallowed? Did he say, Thou most perfidious villain, thou monster of iniquity and ingratitude! thou desperately wicked wretch! dost thou, prompted by thy base covetousness, treacherously attempt to ruin thy gracious Master and best Friend; thy most benign and bountiful Saviour? No; instead of such proper language, he useth the most courteous and endearing terms: Ἑταῖρε, ἐφ' ᾧ πάρει; *Friend,* (or companion,) *for what dost thou come?* or what is thy business here? A tacit charitable warning there is to reflect upon his unworthy and wicked action, but nothing apparent of wrath or reproach.

Matt. xxvi. 50.

From his own disciples and servants, who had beheld his many miraculous works, and were indebted to him for the greatest favours, he reasonably might have expected a most faithful adherence and most diligent attendance on him in that juncture: yet he found them careless and slothful: What then? How did he take it? Was he angry, did he upbraid, did he storm at them? did he threaten to discard them? No; he only first gently admonisheth them: *What, could ye not watch one hour with me?* then a little exciteth them, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:* he withal suggesteth an excuse for their

Matt. xxvi. 40, 45.

drowsiness and dulness; *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak:* in fine, he indulgeth to their weakness, letting them alone, and saying, καθεύδετε λοιπὸν, *Sleep on now, and take your rest.* SERM. XLII. Matt. xxvi. 31.

When he foresaw they would be offended at his (to appearance) disastrous estate, and fearfully would desert him, he yet expressed no indignation against them, or decrease of affection toward them upon that score; but simply mentioneth it, as unconcerned in it, and not affected thereby.

And the unworthy apostacy of that disciple, whom he had especially favoured and dignified, he only did mildly forewarn him of, requiting it foreseen by the promise of his own effectual prayers for his support and recovery; and when St. Peter had committed that heinous fact, our good Lord only *looked on him* with an eye of charity and compassion, which more efficaciously struck him, than the most dreadful threat or sharp reprehension could have done: Peter thereupon *went out, and wept bitterly.* Luke xxii. 61, 62. Ἐνέβλεψε τῷ Πέτρῳ.

When the high priest's officer, upon no reasonable occasion, did injuriously and ignominiously strike him, he returned only this mild expostulation: *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; if well, why smitest thou me?* that is, I advise thee to proceed in a fair and legal way against me, not to deal thus boisterously and wrongfully, to thy own harm. John xviii. 22. Cypr. Ep. 65.

Even careful and tender he was of those who were the instruments of his suffering; he protected them from harm who conducted him to execution; as we see in the case of the high priest's servant, whom (with more zeal than wherewith he ever regarded his own safety) he defended from the fury of his own friend, and cured of the wounds received in the way of persecuting himself. Luke xxii. 51, &c.

All his demeanour under that great trial was perfectly calm, not the least regret or reluctancy of mind, the least contradiction or obloquy of speech appearing therein; such it was as became *the Lamb of God,* who was to *take away the sins of the world,* by a willing oblation of himself; such as did exactly correspond to the ancient prophe- Isa. liii. 7.

SERM. XLII. Isa. l. 6.

cies: *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;* and, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*

Neither did the wrongful slanders devised and alleged against him by suborned witnesses, nor the virulent invectives of the priests, nor the barbarous clamours of the people, nor the contemptuous spitting upon him and buffeting him, nor the cruel scourgings, nor the contumelious mockeries, nor all the bloody tortures inflicted upon him, wring from him one syllable importing any dissatisfaction in his case, any wrath conceived for his misusages, any grudge or ill-will in his mind toward his persecutors; but, on the contrary, instead of hatred and revenge, he declared the greatest kindness and charity toward them, praying heartily to God his Father for the pardon of their sins. Instead of aggravating their crime and injury against him, he did in a sort extenuate and excuse it by consideration of their ignorance and mistake: *Lord,* said he, in the height of his sufferings, *forgive them, for they know not what they do.* The life they so violently bereaved him of, he did willingly mean to lay down for the ransom of their lives; the blood they spilt, he wished to be a salutary balsam for their wounds and maladies; he most cheerfully did offer himself by their hands a sacrifice for their offences. No small part of his afflictions was a sense of their so grievously displeasing God, and pulling mischief on their own heads, a foresight of his kind intentions being frustrated by their obstinate incredulity and impenitence, a reflection upon that inevitable vengeance, which from the Divine justice would attend them; this foreseen did work in him a distasteful sense, (more grievous than what his own pain could produce,) and drew from him tears of compassion, (such as no resentment of his own case could extort;) for, *When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace.*

Luke xxiii. 34.

Luke xix. 41. xiii. 34.

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If ever he did express any commotion of mind in reference to this matter, it was only then when one of his friends, out of a blind fondness of affection, did presume to dissuade him from undergoing these evils; then indeed, being somewhat moved with indignation, he said to St. Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* Matt. xvi. 23.

Neither was it out of a stupid insensibility or stubborn resolution, that he did thus behave himself: for he had a most vigorous sense of all those grievances, and a strong (natural) aversation from undergoing them; as those dolorous agonies wherewith he struggled, those deadly groans he uttered, those monstrous lumps of blood he sweat out, those earnest prayers he made to be freed from them, declare; but from a perfect submission to the divine will, and entire command over his passions, an excessive charity toward mankind, this patient and meek behaviour did spring: *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt; let not my will, but thine be done. No man taketh away my life, but I lay it down of my own accord; I will give my flesh for the life of the world.* So doth our Lord himself express the true grounds of his passion and his patience. Matt. xxvi. 37, 38. Luke xxii. 44. John xii. 27. Matt. xxvi. 39. Heb. v. 7. John xviii. 11. Matt. xxvi. 39. Luke xxii. 42. John x. 18. vi. 5.

Such is the example of our Lord: the serious consideration whereof how can it otherwise than work patience and meekness in us? If he, that was *the Lord of glory*, (infinitely excellent in dignity and virtue,) did so readily embrace, did so contentedly endure such extremities of penury, hardship, disgrace, and pain, how can we refuse them, or repine at them? Can we pretend to a better lot than he received, or presume that God must deal better with us than he did with his own dearest Son? Can we be displeased at a conformity to our Lord and master? Can we, without shame, affect to live more splendidly, or to fare more deliciously than he chose to do? Shall we fret or wail, because our desires are crossed, our projects defeated,

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our interests anywise prejudiced; whenas his most earnest desires and his most painful endeavours had so little of due and desired success; when he was ever ready, and had so constant occasion to say, *Let not my will be done?* Can we despise that state of meanness and sorrow which he, from the highest sublimities of glory and beatitude, was pleased to stoop unto? Can we take ourselves for the want of any present conveniences or comforts to be wretched, whenas the fountain of all happiness was destitute of all such things, and scarce did ever taste any worldly pleasure? Are we fit or *worthy to be his disciples*, if we will not *take up his cross and follow him*; if we will not go to his school, (that school wherein he is said himself to have *learnt obedience*,) if we will not con that lesson, which he so loudly hath read out, and transcribe that copy which he so fairly hath set before us? Can we pretend to those great benefits, those high privileges, those rich and excellent rewards, which he hath attained for us, and which he proposeth to us, if we will not go on toward them in that way of patience which he hath trod before us?

Luke xiv. 27. ix. 23. Matt. x. 38. xvi. 24.

Heb. v. 8.

Heb. ii. 9. 10. Phil. ii. 9.

Heb. xii. 3. Can we also, *if we consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners*, be transported with any wrathful or revengeful passion, upon any provocation from our brethren? Can we hope or wish for better usage from men than our Lord did ever find? Can we be much displeased with any man for thwarting our desires or interests, for dissenting from our conceits, for crossing our humours, whenas he, to whom all respect and observance was due, did meet with so little regard or compliance in any way; continually did encounter repulses, disappointments, oppositions from the perverse and spiteful world? Can we be very jealous of our credit, or furious when our imaginary honour (honour that we never really deserved or can justly claim, being guilty of so many great faults and sins) is touched with the least disgraceful reflection, if we do well observe and mind, that the most truly, and indeed only honourable personage (only honourable, because only innocent person) that ever was, had his reputation aspersed

Quam gravis causa sit hominis Christiani servum pati nolle, cum prior passus sit Dominus, &c. *Cypr. Ep.* 56.

by the most odious reproaches which deepest envy and malice could devise, without any grievous resentment, or being solicitous otherwise to assert or clear it than by a constant silence? Can we be exasperated by every petty affront, (real or supposed,) when the most noble, most courteous, most obliging person that ever breathed upon earth, was treacherously exposed to violence by his own servant, shamefully deserted by his own most beloved friends, despitefully treated by those whom he never had offended, by those upon whom he had heaped the greatest benefits, without expressing any anger or displeasure against them, but yielding many signal testimonies of tenderest pity and love toward them? Can we see our Lord treated like a slave and a thief, without any disturbance or commotion of heart; and we vile wretches, upon every slight occasion, swell with fierce disdain, pour forth reproachful language, execute horrible mischief upon our brethren? He indeed was surrounded with injuries and affronts; every sin, that since the foundation of things hath been committed, was an offence against him, and a burden upon him; (*God laid upon him the iniquities of us all;*) so many declared enemies, so many rebels, so many persecutors, so many murderers he had as there have lived men in the world; for every sinner did in truth conspire to his affliction and destruction; we all in effect did betray him, did accuse him, did mock, did scourge, did pierce, and crucify him; yet he forgave all offences, he died for all persons; *while we were yet enemies, yet sinners, he died for us,* to rescue us from death and misery: and shall we not then, in imitation of him, for his dear sake, in gratitude, respect, and obedience to him, be ready to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to forgive any small wrongs or offences from them; whatever they do to us, to love them, and do them what good we can? If so admirable a pattern of patience, and meekness so immense, cannot, what is there that can oblige or move us? I conclude with those doxologies to our so patient and meek Redeemer:

Isa. liii. 6.

Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

Rependamus illi patientiam, quam pro nobis ipse dependit. *Tert. de Pat.* 16.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and Apoc. v. 12, 13

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riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

Apoc. i. 5, 6. *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

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REJOICE EVERMORE.

1 Thess. v. 16.

Rejoice evermore.

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Rejoice evermore! O good Apostle, how acceptable rules dost thou prescribe! O blessed God, how gracious laws dost thou impose! This is a rule, to which one would think all men should be forward to conform; this is a law, which it may seem strange that any man should find in his heart to disobey: for what can any soul desire more than to be always on the merry pin, or to lead a life in continual alacrity? Who readily would not embrace a duty, the observance whereof is not only pleasant, but pleasure itself? Who is so wild as to affect a sin, which hath nothing in it but disease and disgust?

That joy should be enjoined, that sadness should be prohibited, may it not be a plausible exception against such a precept, that it is superfluous and needless, seeing all the endeavours of men do aim at nothing else but to procure joy and eschew sorrow; seeing all men do conspire in opinion with Solomon, that *a man hath nothing better under the sun than—to be merry.* Were it not rather expedient to recommend sober sadness, or to repress the inclinations of men to effuse mirth and jollity? Eccl. viii. 15 ii. 24. iii. 12, 22. v. 18, 26.

So it may seem; but yet, alas! if we consult experience, or observe the world, we shall find this precept very ill obeyed: for do we not commonly see people in heavy

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dumps? do we not often hear doleful complaints? is not this world apparently a stage of continual trouble and grief? Did not the Preacher, upon a diligent survey of *all the works done under the sun*, truly proclaim, *Behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit?* Where, I pray, is any full or firm content? where is solid and durable joy to be found?

Eccl. i. 14.

It is true that men, after a confused manner, are very eager in the quest, and earnest in the pursuit of joy; they rove through all the forest of creatures, and beat every bush of Nature for it, hoping to catch it either in natural endowments and improvements of soul, or in the gifts of fortune, or in the acquists of industry; in temporal possessions, in sensual enjoyments, in ludicrous divertisements and amusements of fancy; in gratification of their appetites and passions; they all hunt for it, though following a different scent, and running in various tracks; some in way of plodding for rare notions; some in compassing ambitious projects; some in amassing heaps of wealth; some in practice of overreaching subtilties; some in wrecking their malice, their revenge, their envy; some in venting frothy conceits, bitter scoffs, or profane railleries; some in jovial conversation and quaffing the full bowls; some in music and dancing; some in gallantry and courting; some in all kinds of riotous excess and wanton dissoluteness; so each in his way doth incessantly prog for joy; but all much in vain, or without any considerable success; finding at most, instead of it, some faint shadows, or transitory flashes of pleasure, the which, depending on causes very contingent and mutable, residing in a frail temper of fluid humours of body, consisting in slight touches upon the organs of sense, in frisks of the corporeal spirits, or in fumes and vapours twitching the imagination, do soon flag and expire; their short enjoyment being also tempered with regret, being easily dashed by any cross accident, soon declining into a nauseous satiety, and in the end degenerating into gall and bitter remorse; for, *Even*, as Solomon observed, *in laughter, the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness;* and,

Prov. xiv. 13.

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Though, as it is said in Job, (ch. xx. ver. 12. 14. 20.) *wickedness is sweet in the mouth—yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him:* so that indeed the usual delights which men affect are such, that we should not if we could, and we could not if we would, constantly entertain them; such *rejoicing evermore* being equally unreasonable and impossible.

Sunt quædam tristes voluptates. *Sen. Ep.* 67 Quaquaversum se vertit anima hominis, ad dolores fingitur alibi, præterquam in te. *Aug. Conf.* v. 10.

Wherefore there is ground more than enough, that we should be put to seek for a true, substantial, and consistent joy; it being withal implied, that we should effect it in another way, or look for it in another box, than commonly men do; who therefore are so generally disappointed, because they would have it upon impossible or undue terms, and least expect it there, where it is only to be had.

It is a scandalous misprision, vulgarly admitted, concerning religion, that it is altogether sullen and sour, requiring a dull, lumpish, morose kind of life, barring all delight, all mirth, all good humour; whereas, on the contrary, it alone is the never-failing source of true, pure, steady joy; such as is deeply rooted in the heart, immoveably founded in the reason of things, permanent like the immortal spirit wherein it dwelleth, and like the eternal objects whereon it is fixed, which is not apt to fade or cloy; and is not subject to any impressions apt to corrupt or impair it: whereas, in our text, and in many texts parallel to it, we see, that our religion doth not only allow us, but even doth oblige us to be joyful, as much and often as can be, not permitting us to be sad for one minute, banishing the least fit of melancholy, charging us in all times, upon all occasions, to be cheerful; supposing, consequently, that it is in some manner possible to be so, and affording power to effect what it doth require.

Such indeed is the transcendant goodness of our God, that he maketh our delight to be our duty, and our sorrow to be our sin, adapting his holy will to our principal instinct; that he would have us to resemble himself, as in all other perfections, so in a constant state of happiness; that as he hath provided a glorious heaven of bliss for

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us hereafter, so he would have us enjoy a comfortable paradise of delight here. He accordingly hath ordered the whole frame of our religion in a tendency to produce joy in those who embrace it; for what is the Gospel, but, as the holy angel, the first promulger of it, did report, *good tidings of great joy to all people?* How doth God represent himself therein, *but as the God of love, of hope, of peace, of all consolation*, cheerfully smiling in favour on us, graciously inviting us to the most pleasant enjoyments, bountifully dispensing most comfortable blessings of mercy, of grace, of salvation to us; for what doth our Lord call us to him, but *that he may give us rest and refreshment to our souls;* that he may *wipe away all tears from our eyes;* that he may save us from most woful despair, and settle us *in a blessed hope;* that we may *enter into our Master's joy;* that *our joy may be full*, and such *as no man can take from us?*

Luke ii. 10. Rom. xv. 33, 13, 5. Eph. ii. 4. 2 Cor. i. 3. xiii. 11. 1 Pet. v. 10. Jam. v. 11. Mat. xi. 28. Apoc. vii. 17. xxi. 4. Tit. ii. 13. Matt. xxv. 21. John xv. 11. xvi. 22, 24.

What is the great overture of the Gospel, but the gift of a most blessed *Comforter, to abide with us for ever*, cheering our hearts with his lightsome presence and ravishing consolations? Wherein doth the kingdom of heaven consist? *not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* What are the prime fruits sprouting from that root of Christian life, the Divine Spirit? they are, as St. Paul telleth us, *love, joy, and peace.* Are there not numberless declarations importing a joyful satisfaction granted to the observers of God's commandments; that *light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart?* Doth not our Lord pronounce a special beatitude to the practiser of every virtue? And if we scan all the doctrines, all the institutions, all the precepts, all the promises of Christianity, will not each appear pregnant with matter of joy, will not each yield great reason and strong obligation to this duty of *rejoicing evermore?*

John xiv. 16. Rom. xiv. 17. Gal. v. 22. Psal. xcvii. 11. cxviii. 15. xxxii. 11. lxviii. 3.

Wherefore a Christian, as such, (according to the design of his religion, and in proportion to his compliance with its dictates,) is the most jocund, blithe, and gay person in the world; always in humour and full of cheer; continu-

ally bearing a mind well satisfied, a light heart and calm spirit, a smooth brow and serene countenance, a grateful accent of speech, and a sweetly composed tenor of carriage; no black thought, no irksome desire, no troublesome passion should lodge in his breast; any furrow, any frown, any cloud doth sit ill upon his face; the least fretful word or froward behaviour doth utterly misbecome him; if at any time it appear otherwise, it is a deflection from his character; it is a blemish and wrong to his profession; it argueth a prevarication in his judgment, or in his practice; he forgetteth that he is a Christian, or hath not preserved the innocence belonging to that name. For, if a Christian remembereth what he is, or is sensible of his condition; if he reflecteth on the dignity of his person, the nobleness of his relations, the sublimity of his privileges, the greatness and certainty of his hopes, how can he be out of humour? Is it not absurd for him that is at peace with Heaven, with his own conscience, with all the world; for the possessor of the best goods, and the heir of a blessed immortality; for the friend, the favourite, the son of God, to fret or wail? SERM. XLIII.

He that is settled in a most prosperous state, that is (if he pleaseth) secure of its continuance, that is well assured of its improvement; that hath whatever good he can wish in his reach, and more than he can conceive in sure reversion; what account can be given that he should be sad, or seem afflicted?

He that hath the inexhaustible spring of good for his portion; that hath his welfare entrusted in God's most faithful hand; that hath God's infallible word for his support; that hath free access to him, *in whose presence is fulness of joy*; that hath frequent tastes of God's goodness, in gracious dispensations of providence, in intercourses of devotion, in the influences of grace; that hath the infinite beauty and excellency for the perpetual object of his contemplation and affection; that enjoyeth the serenity of a sound mind, of a pure heart, of a quiet conscience, of a sure hope, what can he want to refresh or comfort him? Psal. xvi. 11.

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If a true and perfect Christian hath no care to distract him, having discharged all his concerns on God's providence; if he hath no fear to dismay him, being guarded by the Almighty protection from all danger and mischief; if he hath no despair to sink him, having a sure refuge in the divine mercy and help; if he hath no superstitious terrors or scruples to perplex him, being conscious of his own upright intentions to please God, and confident of God's merciful willingness to accept his sincere endeavours; if he hath no incurable remorse to torment him, the stings of guilt being pulled out by by the merits of his Saviour, applied by his faith and repentance; if he hath no longing desires to disquiet him, being fully satisfied with that he doth possess, or may expect from God's bounty, all other things being far beneath his ambition or coveting; if he hath no contentions to inflame him, knowing nought here worth passionately striving for, and being resolved to hold a friendly good-will toward all men; if he hath no repining envy, seeing that none can be more happy than he may be, and that every man's good by charity is made his own; if he hath no fretful discontent, since he gladly doth acquiesce in the condition and success allotted to him, resigning his will to God's pleasure, taking all for best which thence doth occur, being assured that *all things shall work together for his good* and advantage; if he hath no spiteful rancours to corrode his heart, no boisterous passions to ruffle his mind, no inordinate appetites, perverse humours, or corrupt designs to distemper his soul and disturb his life, whence then may sorrow come, or how can sadness creep into him[a]?

What is there belonging to a Christian, whence grief naturally can spring? From God, *our exceeding joy*, the fountain of happiness; from heaven, the region of light and bliss; from divine truth, which illustrateth and cheereth the soul; from God's Law, which *rejoiceth the heart*, and *is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb;* from wis-

Psal. xliii. 4.

Ps. xix. 10. cxix. 103.

[a] Ἐπιθυμίας ἀπελαθείσης εὐδιος ἡ ψυχὴ, καὶ γαληνιῶσα γίνεται. *Just. Mart. ad Græc. Paræn.* 2.

dom, whose *ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace;* from virtue, which cureth our afflictive distempers, and composeth our vexatious passions; from these things, I say, about which a Christian as such is only conversant, no sorrow can be derived; from those sweet sources no bitter streams can flow: but hell, the flesh, the world, darkness, error, folly, sin, and irreligion, (things with which a Christian should have nothing to do, from which he should keep aloof, which he doth pretend utterly to renounce and abandon,) these, these alone, are the parents of discomfort and anguish. SERM. XLIII. Prov. iii. 17.

Wherefore there is the same reason, the same obligation, the same possibility, that we should rejoice evermore, as that we should always be Christians, exactly performing duty, and totally forbearing sin; for innocence and indolency do ever go together, both together making paradise; perfect virtue and constant alacrity are inseparable companions, both constituting beatitude: and as although from our infirmity we cannot attain the highest pitch of virtue, yet we must aspire thereto, endeavouring *to perfect holiness in the fear of God;* so, though it may not be possible to get, yet it is reasonable to seek perpetual joy; which doing in the right way, we shall not fail of procuring a good measure of it. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Matt. v. 48. 1 John iii. 3.

Indeed to exercise piety and to rejoice are the same things, or things so interwoven, that nothing can disjoin them; religious practice is like that *river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High*, that is, every pious soul. No good deed can be performed without satisfaction; each virtue hath a peculiar delight annexed to it: whence the acts of joy, which upon various objects, grounds, and occasions, we may exert, being numberless, I shall only touch a few principal instances. Psal. xlvi. 4.

1. We should evermore rejoice in the exercise of our faith; according to that prayer of our Apostle for the Romans, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* Rom. xv. 13.

Every kind of faith (that which embraceth divine truths,

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that which applieth God's mercy, that which ensureth God's promises, that which confideth in God's providence, each of them) is a clear spring of joy, ever standing open to us; which he that drinketh, *shall never thirst.*

John vi. 35. vii. 38. iv. 14.

1. The faith which embraceth God's heavenly truth doth not only enlighten our minds, but is apt to affect our hearts: there being no article of faith, or mystery of our religion, which doth not involve some great advantage, some notable favour, some happy occurrence dispensed to us by the goodness of God, the which faith doth apprehend and convey to our spiritual gust, so that we cannot hardly *but receive the word with joy.* For is it not very sweet with faith to contemplate the rich bounty of God in the creation of the world, and producing so goodly a frame, so copious a store of things with a special regard to our sustenance and accommodation? Is it not satisfactory to believe that God, by his almighty hand and vigilant care, with the same benign regard, doth uphold and govern the same? Is it not extremely pleasant with faith to reflect on that great honour and happiness, which God did vouchsafe to confer on mankind, by sending down from heaven his only Son to assume our nature, and to converse with men, that we might be advanced to a *participation of the divine nature*, and to an enjoyment of *communion with God?* How without great delight can we be persuaded, that our Saviour, by his meritorious obedience and passion, hath appeased God's wrath, and inclined his favour toward us, hath satisfied justice, hath expiated our offences, hath ransomed and rescued our souls from the dominion of sin and Satan, from death and corruption, from hell and everlasting torment, hath purchased immortal life and endless bliss for us? What comfort is there in being assured, by the resurrection and triumph of our Lord over death, that our souls are indeed immortal, that our bodies shall be raised from the dust, that our persons are capable of an eternal subsistence in happiness? Will it not much please us with an eye of faith to behold our Redeemer sitting in glorious exaltation at God's right hand, governing the world for the benefit of his Church, dispensing benediction and grace

Matt. xiii. 20. Phil. i. 25.

2 Pet. i. 4. 1 John i. 3.

εἴδοτες— 2 Cor. iv. 14.

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to us; interceding, as our *merciful and faithful High Priest*, for the pardon of our sins, the acceptance of our prayers, the supply of our needs, and the relief of our distresses? If we be fully convinced, that our Lord Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and Saviour, *the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him*, how can we otherwise than follow those, of whom St. Peter saith, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though ye now see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?* So from the hearty belief of every evangelical truth we may suck consolation; each of them is food of our soul; and to believe it is to eat it: which how can we do without a delicious or most savoury relish?

Heb. ii. 17. 1 John ii. 1. Heb. v. 9. 1 Pet. i. 8. Crede et manducasti. *Aug.*

2. At least methinks that faith greatly should exhilarate us, which applieth those verities, (*so worthy of all acceptation,*) wherein God doth open his arms wide to embrace us, proposing most kind invitations and favourable overtures of mercy, upon the fairest terms possible; together with effectual remedies for all the maladies and miseries of our souls: for if we are sensible of our heinous guilts, if we are laden with the heavy burden of our sins, if our heart is galled with sore compunction for our misdeeds, if we are struck with the *terrors of the Lord*, and *tremble with the fear of God's judgments*, how comfortable must it be to be persuaded that God is fully reconcileable to us, is very desirous to shew us mercy, and gladly will accept our repentance; that *we have an advocate with the Father*, who *hath propitiated for our sins*, doth mediate for our peace, hath both full power and certain will, if we sincerely do renounce our offences, wholly to remit them! so that *there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit;* and that *being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Will not this belief revive us, and *make the broken bones to rejoice?* will not the Gospel of peace be hence in truth a *joyful sound* to us? might it not hence well be proclaimed in the Prophet, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to*

1 Tim. i. 15. Ps. xxxviii. 1. vi. 1. cii. 4. cxliii. 4. cxix. 120. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 1. Rom. v. 1. Psal. li. 8. xc. 8, 14. Isa. xl. 1, 2.

SERM. XLIII. *Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned?*

And if we find ourselves in habit of soul grievously distempered, labouring under great impotency and blindness, overborne and oppressed with the prevalency of corruption, pestered with unreasonable desires and passions, unable to curb our inclinations and appetites, to resist temptations, to discharge our duty in any tolerable measure, or with any ease; is it not then comfortable to believe, that we have a most faithful and skilful physician at hand to cure our distempers; that we have a powerful succour within ken, to relieve our infirmities; that God is ready to impart an abundant supply of grace, of light, of spiritual strength to direct and assist us? that if any man doth lack *wisdom*, he is encouraged *with faith to ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not?* If any man want strength, God's Almighty Spirit is promised to those who with humble earnestness do implore it; so that we may *be able to do all things* (incumbent on us) *by Christ who strengtheneth us?*

Jam. i. 5, 6. Luke xi. 13. Phil. iv. 13. Rom. vii. 25. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 13.

3. And what more hearty satisfaction can we feel, than in a firm persuasion concerning the real accomplishment of those *exceedingly great and precious promises*, whereby we become capable of the most excellent privileges, the most ample benefits, the most happy rewards that can be? How can the belief, that, by God's infallible word, or as surely as truth itself is true, an eternal inheritance of a treasure that cannot fail, of a glory that cannot fade, of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, of a felicity surpassing all expression and all conceit, is reserved for us, in recompence of our faithful obedience; how, I say, can that be a dead, dull, dry belief, void of sprightly comfort and pleasure?

2 Pet. i. 4.

Likewise the faith of confidence in God's good providence and paternal care over us, (whatever our condition or circumstances be,) should infuse a cheerful refreshment of heart into us.

It is in holy Scripture most frequently asserted, that he who placeth his trust in God is a very blessed and happy

person; and can we, with great satisfaction, partake of that beatitude? SERM. XLIII.

Can we, by such a trust, disburden all our solicitous cares, all our anxious fears, all the troubles of our spirit, and pressures of our condition upon God, with strong assurance, that from his mighty power and watchful care, in due time, in the most expedient manner, we shall receive a competent supply of our wants, a riddance from our grievances, a protection from all danger and harm, a blessing upon all our good endeavours and undertakings, without feeling much ease and peace in our hearts?

What can be more cheering than a persuasion, that all our concerns are lodged in the hands of such a Friend, so wise, so able, so faithful, so affectionate, so ever readily disposed to help us, and further our good? They who trust in God are said *to abide under the shadow of the Almighty*, and *to be covered with his wings*; God is often styled their rock, their fortress, their shield and buckler, their defence and refuge; and are they not then impregnably safe? why then should they fear any disaster? at what occurrence should they be disturbed? Have they not huge reason to say with the Psalmist, *In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice; The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him.* May not each of those confiders in God well repress all insurrections of trouble and grief, with that holy charm, *Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? O trust in God——for he is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

Psal. xci. 1. Psal. lxi. 4. xci. 4. lvii. 1. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 7. xviii. 2. lxii. 2. Psal. cxii. 2. Psal. lxiii. 7. Psal. xxviii. 7. (Ps. xxxiii. 21.) Psal. xlii. 14. xliii. 5.

II. We should evermore rejoice in the practice of Christian hope, making good that aphorism of Solomon, *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness;* and obeying those apostolical injunctions, that we should *rejoice in hope;* that we should *retain the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end.* Those excellent and most beneficial truths, those sweet proposals of grace and mercy, those rich promises, which faith doth apprehend as true in a general re-

Prov. x. 28. Rom. xii. 12. Heb. iii. 6.

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ference to all Christians, hope doth appropriate and apply as particularly touching ourselves; improving the knowledge of our common capacity into a sense of our special interest in them. God, saith our faith, will assuredly receive all penitent sinners to mercy, will crown all pious Christians with glory, will faithfully perform whatever he hath graciously promised to all people, hath a tender care for all that love and fear him; but God, saith our hope, will have mercy on me, will *render to me the wages of righteousness*, will *verify his good word to me his servant*, will protect, will deliver, will bless me in all exigencies; if so, being conscious of our sincere endeavour to serve and please God; if discerning, from a careful reflection upon our heart and ways, that in some good measure with fidelity and diligence we have discharged the conditions required of us, we can entitle ourselves to God's special affection, we can accommodate his word to our case, we can assume a propriety in his regard, how can we forbear conceiving joy?

2 Tim. iv. 8.

1 Kings viii. 26.

All hope, in proportion to the worth of its object, and the solidity of its ground, is comfortable; it being *the anchor of the soul*, which stayeth and supporteth it in undisturbed rest; it appeasing unquiet desires; it setting absent goods before us, and anticipating future enjoyments by a sweet foretaste[a]: seeing then, if we have a good conscience, and *our heart doth not condemn us*, our hope is grounded *on the Rock of ages*, (on the immutable nature and the infallible word of God;) seeing it is the hope of the most worthy, the most sublime, the most incomparable and inestimable goods, it must be most extremely delightful.

Heb. vi. 19.

1 John iii. 21.

Is. xxvi. 4.

If it much pleaseth men to conceit themselves next heirs of a fair estate, to have the reversion of a good office, to be probable expectants of a great preferment (although death may intercept, or other accidents may obstruct the accomplishment of such hopes,) how much more shall that *lively hope*, of which St. Peter speaketh, *of an inheritance incor-*

1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

[a] Καὶ πρὸ τοῦ παραστῆναι ὑπόσχεσιν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας αὐτὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τῇ ἐλπίδι γαυρουμένη ἐφαίνεται. *Const. Ap.* vii. 33.

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ruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, (which hope therefore can never be dashed or defeated,) breed a most cheerful satisfaction, far transcending all other pleasures, which spring from the most desirable fruitions here; according to that admonition of our Lord, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that* Luke x. 20. *the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

III. We should evermore rejoice in the performing the duty of charity; both that which we owe to God, and that which is due to our neighbour.

Love is the sweetest and most delectable of all passions; and when, by the conduct of wisdom, it is directed in a rational way toward a worthy, congruous, attainable object, it cannot otherwise than fill the heart with ravishing delight.

And such (in all respects superlatively such) an object is God; he infinitely beyond all other things deserveth our affection, as most perfectly amiable and desirable, as having obliged us by innumerable and inestimable benefits, all the good that we have ever enjoyed, or that we can ever expect, being derived from his pure bounty; all things in the world, in competition with him, being pitifully mean, ugly, and loathsome; all things, without him, being vain, unprofitable, and hurtful to us; so that the Psalmist might well say, *Who in heaven can be compared* Ps. lxxxix. *unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be* 6. *likened unto the Lord? Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Psal. lxxiii. *and there is none upon earth that I can desire beside thee.* 25. He is the most proper object of our love; for we chiefly were framed, and it is the *prime law* of our nature, to love Matt. xxii. him; our soul from original instinct vergeth toward him 38. as its centre, and can have no rest till it be fixed on him; he alone can satisfy the vast capacity of our minds, and fill our boundless desires.

He, of all lovely things, most certainly and easily may be attained; for whereas commonly men are crossed in their affection, and their love is embittered from their

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affecting things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or coy things, which disdain and reject their affection; it is concerning God quite otherwise: for,

John vi. 37. Psal. lxx. 4. 2 Cor. v. 20. John xiv. 21, 23. Apoc. iii. 20. 1 John iv. 19.

He is most ready to impart himself, and *will not reject any that cometh unto him;* he most earnestly desireth and wooeth our love; he is not only most willing to correspond in affection, but doth prevent us therein, for *we love him*, saith the Apostle, *because he first loved us.*

Rom. viii. 28. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

He doth cherish and encourage our love by sweetest influences and most comfortable embraces, by kindest expressions of favour, by most beneficial returns, ordering that *all things shall work together for good to those who love him;* and whereas all other objects do in the enjoyment much fail our expectation, he doth ever far exceed it.

Wherefore, in all affectionate motions of our hearts toward God, in desiring him, or seeking his favour and friendship; in embracing him, or setting our esteem, our good-will, our confidence on him; in enjoying him by devotional meditations and addresses to him; in a reflexive sense of our interest and propriety in him; in that mysterious union of spirit, hereby we do closely adhere to him, and are, as it were, inserted in him; in a hearty complacence in his benignity, a grateful resentment of his kindness, and a zealous desire of yielding some requital for it, we cannot but feel very pleasant transports, assuring to us the truth of that saying in the Psalm, *They that love thy name shall be joyful in thee;* and disposing us to cry out with the Psalmist, *How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

1 Cor. vi. 17. Acts xi. 23. Deut. x. 20. John xv. 4, 6. Psal. v. 12. Psal. xxxvi. 7. Psal. lxiii. 3.

Indeed that celestial flame (kindled in our hearts by the spirit of love) cannot be void of warmth; we cannot fix our eyes upon infinite beauty, we cannot taste infinite sweetness, we cannot cleave to infinite felicity, without we should also perpetually rejoice in the first daughter of love to God, charity toward men; the which in complexion and cheerful disposition doth most resemble its mother: for it doth rid all those gloomy, keen, turbulent imaginations and passions, which cloud our mind, which fret our

heart, which discompose the frame of our soul, (from burning anger, from storming contention, from gnawing envy, from rankling spite, from racking suspicion, from distracting ambition and avarice.) It consequently doth settle our mind in an even temper, in a sedate humour, in an harmonious order, in that pleasant state of tranquillity, which naturally doth result from the voidance of irregular passions. SERM. XLIII.

And who can enumerate or express the pleasures which do await on every kind, on each act of charity?

How triumphant a joy is there in anywise doing good! whereby we feed good humour, and gratify our best inclinations; whereby we oblige our brethren, and endear ourselves to them; whereby we most resemble the divine goodness, and attract the divine favour.

St. Paul telleth us, that *God loveth a cheerful giver;* and he prescribeth, that *he who sheweth mercy,* should do it ἐν ἱλαρότητι, *with merriness;* and in the Law it is commanded, *Thine heart shall not grieve, when thou givest to thy poor brother:* and who indeed can out of charity give alms or shew mercy without cheerfulness? seeing that he thereby doth satisfy his own mind, and doth ease his own bowels; considering that in doing good to his neighbour he receiveth far more good to himself; that he then doth put forth his stock to very great and most certain advantage; that he dischargeth an office very acceptable to God, doth much oblige him, and render him a debtor, doth engage him abundantly to requite and reward that beneficence. 2 Cor. ix. 7. Rom. xii. 8. Deut. xv. 10. Ecclus. xxxv. 10.

What satisfaction is there in forgiving offences! whereby we discharge our souls from vexatious inmates, (black thoughts and rancorous animosities;) whereby we clear ourselves from the troubles attending feuds and strifes; whereby we imitate our most gracious Creator, and transcribe the pattern of our meek Redeemer; whereby we render ourselves capable of divine mercy, and acquire a good title to the pardon of our own sins; according to that divine word, *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you.* Matt. xi. 25. xxv. 35.

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How unconfinedly and inexhaustibly vast is that delight which a charitable complacence in the good of our neighbour (*a rejoicing with those that rejoice*) may afford! a man thence engrossing all the good in the world, and appropriating to himself all the prosperous successes, all the pleasant entertainments, all the comfortable satisfactions of his neighbour. Even a charitable sympathy, or condolency, in the adversities of our neighbour, is not destitute of content; for the soul is thereby melted into a gentle temper, susceptive of the best impressions; we share in the comfort which we minister to others; we are refreshed in that kindly submission to the good pleasure of God, in that lightsome contemplation of God's mercy, in those comfortable hopes of a happy issue, which we suggest to the afflicted; we thence are disposed to a grateful sense of God's goodness, in preserving ourselves from those calamities, and in qualifying us to comfort our brethren; we feel satisfaction in reflecting upon this very practice, and observing that we do act conformably to good-nature, to the dictates of reason, to the will of God, therein discharging a good conscience, and enjoying a portion of that *continual feast.*

Rom. xii. 15.
1 Cor. xiii. 6.
Rom. xii. 15.
2 Cor. i. 6. vii. 7.
Συμπαρακλῆσαι.
Rom. i. 12.

I should, if the time would permit, farther declare how we should find delight in the contemplation of all God's attributes, of his works, of his word; in thankful resentment of all God's benefits; in willing obedience to all God's laws; how joy is a proper fruit growing on the practice of humility, of justice, of temperance, of devotion, of every virtue and grace: more particularly I should have evidenced how, from a patient submission to God's afflicting hand, from penitential contrition of heart for our sins, from a pious fear and solicitude in working out our salvation, most sweet consolations (so tempering those ingredients as to render their bitterness very savoury) may spring: but in recommending joy I would not produce grief; and therefore shall not farther annoy your patience.

SERMON XLIV.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, &c.

PROV. iv. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c.

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BEFORE we do apply ourselves to inculcate this precept, it is requisite that we should somewhat explain the terms, and settle the meaning thereof; in doing that, we begin with the last words, which qualify the action enjoined as to its degree, or extent; *with all diligence:* the words (מִכָּל־מִשְׁמָר) answering to these in the Hebrew, do, according to the various use or force of the particle מן, admit a threefold acception. They may (1.) denote absolutely the intenseness in degree, or extension in kind, of the performance required in this precept: πάσῃ φυλακῇ τήρει σὴν καρδίαν, *Omni custodia serva cor tuum;* keep thy heart with all custody; that is, with all sorts or with all degrees of care and diligence; so the LXX. Interpreters, and the vulgar Latin following them, render those words. They may (2.) taking the particle for a *Mem excellentiæ*, as they call it, signifying comparatively *præ omni custodia serva cor tuum;* keep thy heart above all keeping; that is, especially and more than thou keepest any other thing; so doth Pagnin understand them, not without cause, both for the reason subjoined here, *because from it are the issues of life;* that is, because it is the principal part and fountain of all vital operations, and therefore deserveth the best custody; as also for that in what follows, and in

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other places of Scripture frequently, we are enjoined to keep our tongues from bad discourse, our eyes from wandering after bad objects, our feet from declining to bad courses; and therefore probably in comparison to these, although needful and inferior custodies, we are admonished to this most espcially incumbent custody of our hearts. They may also, (3.) and that probably enough, be taken so as to denote the universality of the object, or matter of this keeping, or the adequate term and bound thereof; keep thy heart, ἀπὸ παντὸς φυλάγματος, *ab omni re custodienda*, from every thing which it should be kept from; that is, from every thing offensive or hurtful to it: so did Aquila and Theodotion translate the words. These senses are all of them good, and each may fairly pretend to find place in the meaning of the words; which of them with most likelihood I shall not discuss, meaning only to insist upon the substance of the precept; the nature of which being duly considered, will infer that it is to be observed according to the manner and measure prescribed, understood according to any of those senses, or according to all of them conjointly.

As for the meaning of the words, *Keep thy heart*, two inquiries may be made: 1. What the heart is, which Solomon adviseth us to keep: 2. What to keep it doth import.

To the first I answer, that in the style of Scripture the heart doth commonly import the whole inward man, the ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, *the man within us*, as St. Paul speaketh, the ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος, *the hidden man of the heart*, as St. Peter calleth it, comprehending all the thoughts and imaginations, all the inclinations and dispositions, all the judgments and opinions, all the passions and affections, all the resolutions and purposes formed within us; in short, all interior, whether tendencies to move, or actual motions of human soul. For the Scripture (by the way we may observe it) seemeth to favour that anciently most common and current opinion, (embraced by Aristotle himself, even as true in strict philosophy, although rejected by most of the latter schools,) that the heart, that material

Rom. vii. 22.

1 Pet. iii. 4.

part and principal entrail of our body, is the chief seat of the soul, and immediate instrument of its noblest operations. However, because the heart in a man's breast is most inwardly seated, most secluded from sight, guarded from access, fenced from danger, thence whatever is inmost, most invisible, most inaccessible in any thing, is called the heart thereof: and all a man's secret thoughts, inclinations, opinions, affections, designs, are involved in this name; sometimes all, or divers of them conjunctly, are called his heart; sometimes any one of them singly (as there is subject or occasion of using the word) is so termed: instances in every kind are innumerably many, and very obvious; and therefore I shall not spend time in producing any; but shall suppose that here the word may be understood in its utmost extent, so as to comprehend all the particulars intimated; there being no apparent reason for preferring or excluding any; all of them being capable of moral quality, both simply and immediately in themselves, and consequentially as they may be the principles of good or bad actions; and because all of them may be, need to be, ought to be, the objects of the keeping here enjoined.

But then what is this *keeping?* I answer, that the word, as applied to this matter, is especially capable of three senses, each of which may be exemplified.

1. It may imply to observe, that is, to keep it under a constant view, as it were; to mark or attend unto, to inquire into and study our heart. So, *My Son*, saith the Wise Man, *give me thy heart, and let thine eyes keep* (or observe) *my ways:* the same word which here, is there used, both in the Hebrew and Greek, and can there well signify no other custody but that of attending unto; it being the office of the eye only to look and observe. Likewise, *Observe*, saith God in the Law, *and hear all these words which I command thee;* that is, hear them very attentively; and so in divers other places. Prov. xxiii. 26. Deut. xii. 28.

2. It may also denote the governance or good management of our hearts, keeping all the motions thereof in due order, within fit compass, applying them to good, and

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restraining them from bad things; so the Psalmist useth the word, when he saith, *I will keep my mouth with a bridle;* that is, I will so rule and curb it, that no evil language shall issue from it: so when the Wise Man adviseth *to keep our foot when we go to the house of God;* by keeping it, he means rightly to guide and order our proceedings, or well to dispose ourselves when we address ourselves to religious performances: so again, *He*, saith he, *that keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof;* he that keepeth it, that is, he that dresseth and ordereth it to advantage for bearing fruit.

Psal. xxxix. 1.

Eccl. vi. 1.

Prov. xxvii. 18.

3. Again, keeping may be taken for preserving, guarding, securing from mischief or damage; which indeed is the most common use of the word, and therefore we need no instancing to countenance it.

Now any of these senses may be intended here, or all of them together; and they indeed are in the nature of the thing so coherent, or so mutually dependent one on the other, that any one of them can hardly be practised without the rest: for without heedfully observing our heart, we cannot well govern it; and an ill governed heart cannot easily be attended to; and without both watchful observation and skilful management of it, we cannot guard it from evil; and reciprocally, without guarding it, we cannot well rule it, or duly mind it; such a complication there is in practice of these three custodies.

I shall at present only discourse concerning the first of them, which seems in the nature of things, and according to our method of acting, to precede. According to this exposition, when it is said, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, we may understand it as if each of us were thus advised: With a most constant and wary care observe all the interior propensions and motions of thy soul; whatever is done or designed within thee, whither thy desires lean, what thy affections are stirred by, to what thy judgment of things doth lead thee; with greatest attention and assiduity mark and ponder it.

It is a peculiar excellency of human nature, which seemeth more to distinguish a man from any inferior rank

of creatures than bare reason itself, that he can reflect upon all that is done within him, can discern the tendencies of his soul, is acquainted with his own purposes. Some shadows of other rational operations are discoverable in beasts; and it is not easy to convince them, who, from plausible experiments, do affirm them sometimes to syllogize: but no good reason or experience can, I suppose, make it probable, that they partake of this reflexive faculty; that they do ever regard or remark upon their own imaginations; they seem always to march directly forward with a blind impetuousness toward some pleasing object, without attending to the fancy that guides them, or the appetite which excites them: neither indeed do they seem to need any such power in order to the preservation of their life, or gratifying of their sense, which are the main ends they were designed and fitted for. But man being designed by his Maker, disposed by the frame of his nature, and obliged by a law imposed on him, not to follow casual impulses from exterior objects, nor the bare conduct of his imagination, nor the sway of his natural propensities; but to regulate as well the internal workings of his soul, as his external actions, according to certain laws or rules prescribed him, to settle his thoughts upon due objects, to bend his inclinations into a right frame, to constrain his affections within due bounds, to rectify his judgments of things, to ground his purposes upon honest reasons, and direct them unto lawful matters: it is needful that he should have this power of discerning whatever moveth or passeth within him, what he thinks upon, whither he inclines, how he judgeth, whence he is affected, wherefore he doth resolve; without this power he could not be a moral agent, not able to perform any duty, not properly subject to any law, not liable to render an account of his doings: did he not perceive his own thoughts, how could he dispel them, when they are bad or vain? might he not observe his own inclinations, how could he strive to restrain them or to reform them, when they draw to unlawful practices? were he not sensible of his affections, how could he endeavour to reduce or compose them, when they be-

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come exorbitant or tumultuous? were he not conscious of his own opinions, how could he weigh and examine them? how could he conform his actions to them, or practise according to the dictates of his conscience? It is therefore plainly needful that man should be endued with this power, for that without it he can neither perform the duty required of him, nor enjoy the benefits he is capacified and designed for: our Maker therefore hath conferred it upon us, our duty consists in its right use, our advantage ariseth from the constant and careful exercise of this excellent faculty: constant and careful, I say: *constant*, for observation implies so much; for, if ever we shut our eyes or turn our heads aside, what we look to may be gone; much therefore will pass away undiscerned and unobserved by us, especially such quick and fleeting things as are the interior motions of our soul will escape; wherefore a continual vigilancy is requisite to a keeper of the heart: it must also be *careful;* as the keeper of a thing so nimble and slippery must not sleep, so he must not slumber; he must not be oscitant, but very intent upon his charge; superficial glances upon the outward face, as it were, of the soul, will not suffice: to *observe*, is with earnest care to look through the matter, to discern whatever lurketh therein, to pierce into the very depth and bottom of it, to spy through every nook and corner therein; otherwise it is but slightly viewed rather than truly observed: especially so subtile, so intricate, so obscure a thing as a man's heart is, requireth an extraordinary application of mind in observing it with judgment and fruit.

This is then our duty, recommended by the Wise Man: to be continually, with extreme diligence, looking inward upon ourselves, observing what thoughts spring up within us; what imaginations find most welcome harbour in our breasts; what objects most affect us with delight or displeasure; (what it is that we love and readily embrace; what we distaste and presently reject;) what prejudices do possess our minds; wherefore we propose to ourselves such undertakings, conversing with ourselves, and, as it were, discoursing in this manner: What is it that I think upon?

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are my thoughts serious, seasonable, and pure? Whither do I propend? are my inclinations compliant to God's law and good reason? What judgments do I make of things? are my apprehensions clear, solid, sure, built upon no corrupt prejudice? What doth most easily stir me, and how is my heart moved? are my affections calm, and orderly, and well placed? What plots do I contrive, what projects am I driving on? are my designs good, are my intentions upright and sincere? Let me thoroughly inquire into these points, let me be fully satisfied in them: thus should we continually be doing. The holy Scripture doth often bid us to judge ourselves; to examine our works; to search and try; to weigh, to heed, to watch over our ways: *If*, saith St. Paul, *we would judge* (discern, or distinguish) *ourselves, we should not be judged;* that is, we should avoid those miscarriages which bring the divine judgments upon us: and, *Let us*, saith the Prophet Jeremy, *search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord;* and, *I said, I will take heed to my ways*, saith the Psalmist; and, *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established;* is the Wise Man's advice. Search our ways, and ponder our paths; this implies that we first do examine and weigh our hearts, for there our ways begin, thence is motion derived to our feet and to our hands also; all our actions depend as effects of them, all do receive their moral quality thence: whatever in our doings is good or bad, ἔσωθεν ἐκπορεύεται, doth, as our Lord expresses it, issue from within us; our actions are but streams, sweet or bitter, clear or foul, according to the tincture they receive at those inward sources of good or evil inclinations, of true or false judgments, of pure or corrupt intention: there consequently we are principally obliged to exercise the scrutiny and trial required of us.

1 Cor. xi. 31. Εἰ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν. Gal. vi. 4.

Lam. iii. 40. Ps. xxxix. 1. Prov. iv. 26.

Mark vii. 23.

Socrates is reported to have much admired that verse in Homer,

Gell. xiv. 6.

Ὅττι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸν' ἀγαθόντε τέτυκται

affirming, that in it the sum of all wisdom is comprised; the sense and drift thereof being this, as he took it: Seek

SERM. XLIV. and study what good or bad is at home, within thy house; see how all goes in thy breast; employ thy chief inquiry upon the affairs of thy soul; there confining thy curiosity and care.

Such is the duty; and the practice thereof is of huge profit and use, bringing many great benefits and advantages with it; the neglect of it is attended with many grievous inconveniences and mischiefs: and for persuading to the one, dissuading from the other, I shall propound some of them, such as are most obvious, and offer themselves to my meditation.

The most general and most immediate advantage arising hence is this, that, by such a constant and careful inspection, or study upon our hearts, we may arrive to a competent knowledge of, and a true acquaintance with ourselves, (a most useful knowledge, a most beneficial acquaintance,) neither of them being otherwise attainable. *The heart*, as you know the Prophet says, *is deceitful above all things;* and *who*, adds he, *can know it?* Who can know it? None, it seems, but God that made it, and the man that hath it: he that hath it must, I say, be able competently to know it: even in regard to him the question may intimate some difficulty, but it doth not denote an absolute impossibility. Hard it may be for us to know the heart, by reason of its deceitfulness; but the sliest imposture, if narrowly looked into, may be detected: it is a very subtile and abstruse, a very various and mutable thing; the multiplicity of objects it doth converse with, the divers alterations it is subject to from bodily temper, custom, company, example, other unaccountable causes; especially its proneness to comply with, and to suit its judgments of things unto present circumstances without, and present appetites within, do render it such; wherefore it is not indeed easy to know it; but yet possible it is; for under severe penalties we are obliged not to be deceived by it, or, which is all one, not to suffer it to be deceived: *Let no man*, saith St. Paul, *deceive himself: See that ye be not deceived*, saith our Saviour: *Take heed*, saith Moses, *to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived.* Such precepts there are many, obliging us to

Jer. xvii. 9.

1 Cor. iii. 18. Luke xxi. 8. Deut. xi. 16.

know our hearts, and to discover the fallacies put on them, or upon us by them; carrying with them directions how to compass it; that is, by looking about us, and taking heed, by careful circumspection and caution. It is therefore a feasible thing to avoid being imposed upon, and well to understand ourselves; but as other abstruse pieces of knowledge, so this especially cannot be attained without industrious applications of our mind, and constant observations, to find the corners wherein the deceit lurks; we must pursue its secret windings and intrigues; we must trace it step by step, as hunters do wild beasts, into the utmost recesses of its first desires and most deeply radicated prejudices; we must do as David did, when he strove to free himself from distrust and impatience in his straits: *I communed with my own heart*, saith he, *and my spirit made diligent search*; by which practice he found, as he farther acquaints us, that it was *his infirmity*, which moved him to doubt of God's mercy and benignity toward him. Cicero, having somewhere commended philosophy as the most excellent gift by Heaven bestowed upon man, assigns this reason: *because it teaches us, as all other things, so especially this of all most difficult thing, to know ourselves* [a]. But he, with his favour, doth seem to promise for his friend more than she is able to perform; the main part of this knowledge doth lie beyond the reach of any particular method; the empyric seems to have more to do here than the doctor. Philosophy may perhaps afford us some plausible notions concerning the nature of our soul, its state, its power, its manners of acting; it may prescribe some wide directions about proceeding in the discovery of ourselves; but the particular knowledge (and therein the chief difficulty lieth) of ourselves, how our souls stand inclined and disposed, that only our particular earnest study and assiduous observation can yield unto us; and it is an inestimable advantage to obtain it. All men are very curious and inquisitive after knowledge; the being endued

Psal. lxxvii. 6, 10.

[a] Hæc enim una nos cum cæteras res omnes, tum quod est difficillimum dedit, ut nosmetipsos noscceremus. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

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therewith passeth for a goodly ornament, a rich possession, a matter of great satisfaction, and much use: men are commonly ashamed of nothing so much as ignorance; but if any knowledge meriteth esteem for its worth and usefulness, this, next to that concerning Almighty God, may surely best pretend thereto; if any ignorance deserveth blame, this certainly is most liable thereto: to be studious in contemplating natural effects, and the causes whence they proceed; to be versed in the writings and stories of other men's doings; to be pragmatical observers of what is said or done without us, (that which perchance may little concern, little profit us to know,) and in the mean while to be strangers at home, to overlook what passeth in our own breasts, to be ignorant of our most near and proper concernments, is a folly, if any, to be derided, or rather greatly to be pitied, as the source of many great inconveniences to us. For it is from ignorance of ourselves that we mistake ourselves for other persons than we really are; and accordingly we behave ourselves toward ourselves with great indecency and injustice; we assume and attribute to ourselves that which doth not anywise belong unto us, or become us: as put case we are ignorant of the persons we converse with, as to their quality, their merit, their humour; we shall be apt to miscal and mistake them; to misbehave ourselves in our demeanour toward them; to yield them more or less respect than befits them: to cross them rudely, or unhandsomely to humour them: in like manner, if we be strangers to our hearts, shall we carry ourselves toward our ownselves; we shall hence, like men in a frenzy, take ourselves for extraordinary people, rich, and noble, and mighty, when indeed, our condition being duly estimated, we are wretch-

Rev. iii. 17.

edly mean and beggarly. We do frequently hug ourselves, (or rather shadows in our room,) admiring ourselves for qualities not really being in us; applauding ourselves for actions nothing worth, such as proceed from ill principles, and aim at bad ends; whenas, did we turn our thoughts inwards, and regard what we find in our hearts, by what inclinations we are moved, upon what grounds

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Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere, nemo.

we proceed, we should be ashamed, and see cause rather to bemoan than to bless ourselves: descending into ourselves, we might perchance discern that most of our gallant performances (such as not considering our hearts we presume them to be) are derived from self-love or pride; from desire of honour, or love of gain; from fear of damage or discredit in the world, rather than out of love, reverence, and gratitude toward God, of charity, compassion, and goodwill toward our brethren, of sober regard to our own true welfare and happiness; which are the only commendable principles and grounds of action. St. Luke telleth us of certain men, who *persuaded themselves that they were righteous, and despised others;* upon occasion of whom our Saviour dictated the parable of the Pharisee and Publican. Whence, think we, came that fond confidence in themselves, and proud contempt of others? From ignorance surely of themselves, or from not observing those bad dispositions, those wrong opinions, those corrupt fountains within, from whence their supposed righteous deeds did flow [b]. *If any man*, saith St. Paul, giving an account of such presumptions, *thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing*, ἑαυτὸν φρεναπατᾷ, *he cheats himself in his mind; but let every man examine his work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone*, (or privately with himself;) some, he implieth, do impose upon and delude themselves, imagining themselves somebodies, (endued forsooth with admirable qualities, or to have achieved very worthy deeds;) whenas, if they would inquire into themselves, they should find no such matter; that themselves were no such men, and their works no such wonders: but if, saith he, a man doth, δοκιμάζειν ἑαυτῷ τὸ ἔργον, explore and examine what he doeth, and in result thereof doth clearly perceive, that he acteth upon good reasons, and with honest intentions, then may he indeed enjoy a solid interior satisfaction, (a true καύχημα, or exultation of mind,) whatever others, not acquainted with those inward springs of his motion, do please to judge of him and his proceedings. No man in-

Luke xviii. 7.

Gal. vi. 3.

Πρὸς ἑαυτὸν μόνον.

[b] Ῥᾷον ἑαυτὸν ἀπατᾶν, καὶ οἴεσθαι εἶναί τι δέον ὄντα, ὑπὸ τῆς κενῆς δόξης φυσιώμενον. *Nazianz. Orat.* 27.

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deed can truly value himself, or well approve of his own doings, so as to find any perfect comfort in himself, or in them, who doth not by studying himself discover whence and why he acts: one may be a flatterer, but cannot be a true friend to himself, who doth not thoroughly acquaint himself with his own inward state, who doth not frequently consult and converse with himself: a friend to himself, I said; and to be so is one of the greatest benefits that human life can enjoy; that which will most sweeten and solace our life to us: friendship with others (with persons honest and intelligent) is a great accommodation, helping much to allay the troubles, and ease the burdens of life; but friendship with ourselves is much more necessary to our well being; for we have continual opportunities and obligations to converse with ourselves; we do ever need assistance, advice, and comfort at home [c]: and as commonly it is long acquaintance and familiar intercourse together, which doth conciliate one man to another, begetting mutual dearness and confidence, so it is toward one's self: as no man can be a friend to a mere stranger, or to one whose temper, whose humour, whose designs he is ignorant of; so cannot he be a friend to himself, if he be unacquainted with his own disposition and meaning [d]; he cannot in such a case rely upon his own advice or aid when need is, but will suspect and distrust himself; he cannot be pleasant company to himself, but shall be ready to cross and fall out with himself; he cannot administer consolation to his own griefs and distresses; his privacy will become a desertion, his retirement a mere solitude. But passing over this general advantage, I shall with some more minuteness of distinction consider divers particular advantages accruing from the practice of this duty, together with the opposite inconveniences, which are consequent upon the neglect thereof, in the following discourse.

[c] ——patriæ quis exul se quoque fugit?

Αὐτὸς σεαυτῷ χρῷ συμβάλῳ, καὶ τῷ θεῷ. *Naz. Epist.* 60.

[d] Ἔνιοι τὸν ἴδιον βίον ὡς ἀτερπέστατον θέμενοι προσιδεῖν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, οὐδ' ἀνακλάσαι τὸν λογισμὸν ὡς φῶς ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς καὶ περιαγαγεῖν· ἀλλ' ἡ ψυχὴ γέμουσα κακῶν παντοδαπῶν, καὶ φρίττουσα, καὶ φοβουμένη τὸ ἔνδον, ἐκπηδᾷ θύραζε, &c. *Plut. de Curios.* p. 910.

SERMON XLV.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, &c.

PROV. iv. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c.

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I PROCEED to the particular advantages of the practice of this duty, and the inconveniences of the neglect of it.

1. The constant and careful observation of our hearts will serve to prevent immoderate self-love and self-conceit; to render us sober and modest in our opinions concerning, and in our affections toward ourselves; qualifying us to comply with the apostolical precept, μὴ φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν, that is, not to overween, or overvalue ourselves, and our own things; for he that, by serious inspection upon his own heart, shall discern how many fond, impure, and ugly thoughts do swarm within him; how averse his inclinations are from good, and how prone to evil; how much his affections are misplaced and distempered, (while he vehemently delights in the possession, and impotently frets for the want of trifles, having small content in the fruition, and but slender displeasure for the absence of the greatest goods; while empty hopes exalt him, and idle fears deject him; while other various passions, like so many tempests, drive and toss him all about;) who shall observe, how clouds of darkness, error, and doubt do hover upon the face of his soul; so that he quickly taketh up opinions, and soon layeth them down, and often turneth from one mistake unto another; how unsettled his resolutions are, especially in the pursuance of the best goods, and Rom. xii. 3.

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what corrupt mixtures cleave to his best purposes; who taketh notice how backward he is unto, and how cold in, devotions toward God; how little sensible of his goodness, or fearful of his displeasure, or zealous for his honour, or careful of performing his duty toward him; how little also it is, that he desireth or delighteth in the good, that he pitieth and grieveth at the evil of his neighbour; how sluggish also and remiss he is in the pursuance of his own best affairs, and highest concernments; he that doth, I say, frequently with heedfulness regard these imperfections and obliquities in his own heart, how can he be ravished with self-love? How can he be much taken with himself? Can any man dote upon such deformity, admire such weakness and naughtiness? No surely: that men are so amorous of themselves, so haughty and arrogant in their conceits, doth constantly arise from not reflecting on their own hearts; not beholding themselves wistly enough in that mirror; not considering, according to just representation there, how little lovely or worthy they are: if they did practise that, they would see reason, and thence become inclinable, rather to despise, to loathe, to pity themselves.

Leniter ex merito quicquid patiare ferendum est. *Ovid. Ep. 5.*

2. Upon that advantage is consequent, that this practice will dispose us with equanimity and patience to bear all crosses and grievances befalling us; so producing not only an excellent virtue, but a considerable solace to us; for the being conscious of so much unworthiness, which observation of our heart will necessarily discover, will not only justify the providence, (so removing all just cause of complaint,) but will commend the benignity of God unto us, (so administering good matter of thanks.) It will prompt us heartily to confess with those in Ezra, that *our punishments are less than our deservings;* to join in acknowledgment with the Psalmist, that *God hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;* to say with Jeremy, *It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not;* with Jacob, *I am less than any of thy mercies.*

Ezra ix. 13.

Ps. ciii. 10.

Lam. iii. 22.

Gen. xxxii. 10.

3. Particularly this practice will fence us against immo-

derate displeasure occasionable by men's hard opinions, or harsh censures passed on us: for he that by inquiry into himself perceives so many defects in himself, will not so easily nor so greatly be offended, if some of them (or some like to them) be objected to him: since he finds himself truly liable to many more, and greater. Epictetus's advice is, when you are told, that any man speaks ill of you, that you should not apologize, but answer only, that he was ignorant of many other faults of yours, or he would not only have mentioned those. To be disposed, without dissembling or affection, to follow his counsel, would argue a man very intelligent of himself, and well prepared to endure happily and handsomely encounters of this kind, which every man shall be sure to meet with. None indeed can so contentedly brook reproach, or blame, as he that by intimate acquaintance with his own heart doth know the censure passed on him to be in effect mild and favourable; as finding himself a witness of more faults, than any adversary can accuse him of; as being a stricter examiner and severer judge of himself, than the most envious eye or disaffected mind can be. It is also some comfort, that if censures be very outrageous, a man, by knowledge of himself (by knowing his own dispositions, if his person be disfigured by a very ill character; by knowing his own purposes, if his actions be grievously aspersed) is certain they are such; that he can be as well a faithful witness, and just judge for himself, as against himself. SERM. XLV.

4. Likewise this practice will defend us, as from the discomforts of harsh censure, so from the mistakes and miscarriages, to which the more favourable opinions of men, or their flattering expressions, (those luscious poisons,) may expose us [a].

——Nihil est quod credere de se
Non possit, cum laudatur.——

It is not only true of great men, but even of all men: the common nature of men disposeth them to be credulous,

[a] Index ipse sui se totum explorat ad unguem,
Quid proceres, vanique ferat quid opinio vulgi,
Securus——.

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when they are commended, or receive any signification of esteem from others: every ear is tickled with this ἡδιστον ἄκουσμα, this sweet music of applause: but we are not to rely upon others' imperfect and ill-grounded judgment, so much as upon our own more certain knowledge concerning ourselves:

——ne cui de te plus quam tibi credas.

Take no man's word before thine own sense, in what concerns thine own case and character, is an advice deserving our regard and practice: for that a man in questions of this kind is able to be a skilful and indifferent umpire between himself and others; that he is neither elevated nor depressed in mind by external weights, but keepeth himself equally poised in a just consistence by his own well-informed conscience: that neither his heart is exasperated with the bitterest gall of reproach, nor his head intoxicated with the sweetest wine of flattery, is an invaluable convenience of life; or rather, it is a virtue arguing a most strong and healthful constitution of soul. *How great a levity of mind, how great a vanity is it,* saith a good Father, *setting aside a man's own conscience, to follow other men's opinion, (and even that feigned and forged,) to be snatched away by the wind of false praise, to rejoice in being circumvented, and to receive being mocked for a benefit*[b]*?* From being thus abused, this practice alone can secure us; if we know ourselves well, we cannot so easily be deluded by the mistakes of others concerning us, on either hand.

5. Likewise, farther upon the same, this practice will conduce to qualify our opinions, and moderate our passions toward others; so that without intemperate anger, or bitterness, we may bear the faults, errors, and infirmities of our brethren; that we shall be benign in our carriage, and gentle in our censures even toward them, who do not behave themselves so well and wisely as they should do. St. Paul thus admonisheth the Galatians: *Brethren, if a*

[b] Quæ hæc tanta levitas est animi, quæ tanta vanitas relicta propria conscientia alienam opinionem sequi, et quidem fictam atque simulatam: rapi vento falsæ laudationis, gaudere ad circumventionem suam, et illusionem pro beneficio accipere? *Hier.* (vel *Paulinus*) *ad Celant.*

man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual (the more spiritual, whether in truth, or in our own esteem, the more especially are we obliged hereto) *restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou may be also tempted:* σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, looking upon, or spying into thyself; such considering ourselves, taking notice of our own infirmity within, perceiving how subject we are to the impressions of temptation, and that hence it may be our own case to fall and falter, if occasion concur with our weakness; discerning this, I say, as it will be a reason obliging, so it may be an instrument conducing to a mitigation of spirit toward those, whom we see overtaken with mistake, or overborne by frailty. *Why dost thou see a mote in thy brother's eye, but dost not consider the beam in thine own eye?* is our Saviour's question. Why a man should do so, there cannot, as he implies, any good reason be assigned; it is a very unreasonable and inexcusable miscarriage: but whence a man doeth so, is obvious and plain; it is, because he curiously pries into other men's doings, and carelessly neglecteth the observation of his own heart. Did we reflect our sight inwards, we should be more apt to mark our own faults, and less ready to discover those of others; or, however, we should be more gently affected in regard to them: for he that knows himself a beggarly wretch, will he reproach poverty to another? he that, consulting the glass, doth find himself ill-favoured, will he upbraid another for want of grace or beauty? he that perceives that the dart will rebound, and thereby wound himself, will he not be careful of flinging it? will a man be forward in pronouncing a heavy sentence against another, who considers himself by plain consequence involved in the condemnation thereof? Should a man do so, he doth at least render himself uncapable of apology or excuse: so we are told by St. Paul: *Every censurer* (πᾶς ὁ κρίνων) *is*, saith he, *inexcusable; for that in arraigning another he condemns himself:* guilty he is of inexcusable folly, or impudence; of folly and blindness, if he see not; of extreme impudence, if, seeing his own obnoxiousness, he will not abstain from judging others for that, of which himself is guilty in the same kind, or equi-

Marc. Ant. xi. 18.

Matt. vii. 2.

Rom. ii. 1.

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valently in some other. You know how David was caught by Nathan, and unwarily adjudged himself to death: and so may every man expose himself, that is rigorous in censure toward others, without reflecting upon himself, and considering his own heart; wherein he shall find so much ground and matter of being angry with, and judging himself [c]. If we will be fierce and keen, it is reason we should be so first, and chiefly there, where our greatest enemies do abide, whence most mischief ariseth to us; where there is fittest matter, and justest cause of passion: thus is this practice a most proper and effectual remedy for those baneful vices of pride and peevishness in ourselves, of malignity and fury toward others. But farther,

2 Sam. xii.

6. The observation of our heart yieldeth great advantage, in being very conducible to render men truly wise and prudent, in those things especially, which most nearly concern them; giving them to see before them, and to understand what they do; and to proceed without security; as contrarily the neglect thereof rendereth men unadvised and uncertain in their doings. A main point of prudence consisteth in suiting a man's undertakings to his powers and capacities; in not attempting things surpassing his ability, or fitness; and in not declining such useful or beneficial attempts as he may well compass. Some are overbold and rash in setting upon things beyond their strength to accomplish, or skill to manage; whence commonly with shame and sorrow they are defeated in their enterprises; others are overbackward and diffident, so as not to adventure upon what they may with good advantage, or perhaps ought to perform; thence depriving themselves of the benefits they might obtain, or omitting the duties which they are obliged to; both which inconveniences usually do proceed from the not looking into and studying the heart; for the most and greatest impediments of action do lie there; being grounded upon inward indispositions, or disagreeableness of men's temper,

[c] Si volumus æqui rerum omnium judices esse, hoc primum nobis suadeamus, neminem esse nostrum sine culpa. *Sen. de Ir.*

Συγγνώμην ἔφη διδόναι πᾶσι τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι, πλὴν ἑαυτῷ. *Cato Maj. Plut.* p. 624.

capacity, inclination to the matters, to which they apply themselves. A tender foot will be galled and lamed, if you set it going in rugged paths; a weak head will turn, if you place it high, or upon the brink of a precipice; a soft spirit cannot well comport with boisterous employment; he that naturally affects calm and quiet, must not hope to come off well, if he engage himself upon affairs exposed to abundance of care and tumult; nor will he, if he be well studied this way, and rightly understand himself, adventure thereupon. It was as well according to wisdom as modesty, that David could say, *My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.* In every undertaking two things occur to be considered: what of difficulty is found therein, and what of temptation; whether it can be done, and whether it should be done. It is a folly to spend our care and pains upon that which is too hard for us to effect; and it is worse than so to adventure upon that, which most probably will bring us into sin, and hurt our souls; only the study of ourselves, weighing our power, and trying our temper, will prevent both: he that doeth this may commonly foresee what, the case being put, he shall do; that if such a temptation doth assault him in such circumstances, his inclinations will be apt to comply therewith, and he shall scarce be able to resist; that, for instance, he shall wax haughty in a state of dignity, become luxurious in abundance of wealth, be distracted with care in a busy employment; and therefore he will not be so forward to engage himself upon such occasions, danger and mischief being so vividly pre-represented to his sight. But he that pondereth not his own heart is ready to presume, that, be the business what it will, he shall come off well; and so unadvisedly rusheth into the snare: he assumes unwieldy burdens upon his shoulders, which he soon feeleth sorely to oppress and pain him; which he can neither bear with ease, nor put off with convenience. When, for instance, the Prophet told Hazael what cruelties and rapines should, when he got power and opportunity, be committed by him; you see how he was startled at the report: *Am I a dog?* saith he;

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Ps. cxiii. 1.

2 Kings xii. 8.

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that is, can I be so vile and base? Yes, he might himself have perceived that he should in likelihood be so; the probability of his doing as the Prophet said, had been no great news to him, if he had observed his own inclinations. Good Agur, on the other side, did better understand himself, when he prayed, *Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me.* He was conscious of natural infirmity, and therefore afraid of being in a condition that might prevail upon it; of great wealth, lest it should tempt him to forgetfulness and neglect of God; *(lest*, saith he, *I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?)* of extreme want, lest it should put him upon unjust, dishonest, and impious courses to maintain his life, *(lest*, adds he, *I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.)* He saw, by looking into himself, that self-love (the root of pride and injustice) was potent in him, and formidable, when occasion should favour it, and therefore, by imploring divine aid, he strove to decline the advantages and occasions of it. It was good counsel which Xenophon tells us the Oracle gave Crœsus, consulting about the success of his attempt against Cyrus, Σαυτὸν γινώσκων εὐδαίμων Κροῖσε περήσεις· *Knowing thyself, thou shalt pass on happily*, (in the course of thy life and undertakings.) Had he, considering his own ability, in relation to the dubious event of things, (that as he could not promise himself good fortune, so he did not know how he should comport with bad; being not sure that he should overcome either his enemies or himself)—thus, I say, had he complied with the Oracle's advice, he might have escaped the loss and sorrow which befel him. So is it with us: if we know not the burden of our vessel, we shall either put more sail to it than it can bear, or less than will suffice to carry it on; it will be overladen, or want fit ballast. If we are ignorant of our capacities, we shall either soar too high with a dangerous confidence, or grovel below in a sluggish listlessness: studying ourselves will help to preserve us in a middle pitch, will direct us in a moderate course, wherein we may proceed with sufficient courage and alacrity; with a prudent foresight, or at least with a comfortable hope of good success.

Prov. xxx. 8.

De Cyri Institit. 7.

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7. Near to that lies another considerable benefit, attending this practice, which is, that it will help to render us expedite in our resolutions, and constant to them; consistent with ourselves, and uniform in our proceedings; whence will arise both great convenience to ourselves and satisfaction to others with whom we deal or converse: as on the contrary side, from the neglect thereof, we shall become slow in deliberation, doubtful in resolution, and unstable in performance. When any occasion of acting is presented, we shall be ready to close with what is agreeable to our inclination, and not repugnant to our judgment, if by due study and experience we are acquainted with them: that acquaintance is a certain preparation to a speedy choice; and we shall upon the same grounds constantly adhere to our choice standing upon so firm a base; and so shall neither discompose ourselves, nor disappoint others by our irresolution and inconstancy. But he that skills not his own heart, first will dwell long upon consultation, (not feeling perfectly whither his inward bias doth draw him;) and when he seems, upon some superficial reason, to have determined on one side, some discordance to his own inclination, or some latent prejudice soon discovering itself, he wavers, and at length falls off; finding that he hath promised to himself, or others, what he is unable or unwilling to perform; so, like St. James's two-souled man, he is unsteady in all his ways. The hard student of himself is like a man that hath his estate *in numerato*, in ready cash, all in his hand, or at his command; he can presently tell what he can do, and satisfy those he hath to do with. Go to him, you may know where to have him, even just where you left him, or where he uses to be; you may expect a sudden dispatch, and you may rely upon his word; for he knows beforehand what he doeth, and shall continue to like; why he determines so or so; and cannot be removed from his well-grounded purpose, (that which is by the philosopher termed *ratio nec dissidens, nec hæsitans*, a reason that doth not strive, nor stick, he is master of.) But he that neglects this practice, what he hath any title to, lieth dispersed, and laid up in corners unknown to himself,

Jam. i. 8.

Sen. d Vit. B. 8.

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so that himself cannot come readily by it; you can hardly tell where to find him; you must wait his resolution; and when it is told you, you cannot be assured thereof, nor anywise satisfied that he will stick to his word, or his mind: he knows not thoroughly what he would have himself; can you then hope for a certain answer from him? He cannot well trust himself; can you then rely upon him? He will find himself mistaken and crossed in his own choice; can you expect less?

Sen. Ep. 20. *Quid est sapientia? semper idem velle, atque idem nolle:* Constancy to a man's self is, saith he, the very being of wisdom: however, nothing more beseems a man, more commends him to society, and suits him to business, is more pleasant and grateful to those who have to do with him, than such a clear, uniform, steady disposition of mind; such a smooth and even tenor of action; nothing renders conversation and commerce more unpleasant, than a fickle lubricity of humour, and unaccountable deformity of behaviour: that study therefore is very useful, which conduceth to breed and maintain the one, and which removeth the other.

8. Again, another valuable convenience of this practice is, that it disposeth unto and preserveth a man's mind in a sober temper, agreeable to his state, and to the circumstances into which he is cast; such a temper I mean as

Eccles. vii. 14. that, which the Wise Man prescribes, where he saith, *In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider.* It is apt to beget either a comfortable joy, or a wholesome regret, according as the interior condition of his soul (that wherein the chief cause of the one or of the other affection is grounded) doth seasonably and justly require. To be transported with mirth and jollity in a state of grievous misery, when reason itself demands sorrow and pity; to be sad and dumpish when all things flow prosperously; either of those will seem marvellously incongruous, and argue a kind of stupidity in him that so behaves himself. Now there is not in truth any calamity so disastrous as that which befalls us within ourselves, no prosperity so worthily delightful as the good proceeding of affairs in our souls; it is the most excellent pleasure a man is capa-

SERM. XLV. 3 John i. 2.

ble of, that which doth spring from the being conscious, that his mind doth εὐοδοῦσθαι, as St. John speaks, that is, go well forward in a happy course, that good thoughts freely do spring up, that good inclinations are strong and prevalent, that good habits of mind wax vigorous, that the love of goodness is improved, that he generally doth thrive in health and strength spiritual. No increase of treasure can affect the covetous, no rising in power and dignity can satisfy the ambitious, no enjoyment of sensual entertainments, can ravish the voluptuous man with so true or great content, as the sensible proficiency in virtuous and pious dispositions of soul, growing *richer unto God*, and stronger in the hopes of his favour, do produce in him that doth affect it, and can perceive it: it is a joy in all respects incomparable: only wise and reasonable, pure and innocent, firm and durable. As on the other hand if it be so that we discern, that within our hearts bad thoughts do swarm and multiply, bad appetites do sway, bad customs do encroach upon us; that desire of and delight in good things decay; that we become more dark, dull, unsettled, in our spiritual apprehensions, more feeble and languid in our prosecutions of virtue, it is a great benefit to have a timely remorse prompting and urging us to endeavour a deliverance from so unhappy a condition; but no man can well either enjoy that comfortable delight, or be affected with this profitable sorrow, who doth not with a careful attention view his heart, and descry how things go there. This consideration mindeth of a farther and more general advantage accruing from this practice; which is this, that,

9. A serious inspection into our hearts doth much avail toward the reformation of our hearts and lives; curing the distempers and correcting the vices of them. For to the curing any disease it is requisite to know the complexion and temper of the patient, and the part affected, and the next causes thereof. As the most grievous of bodily diseases are seated in, or do proceed from, the entrails; but not all of them from the same one of them: and the same disease depends upon the distemper sometimes of one,

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sometimes of another among them: so do all vices (as our Saviour expressly teacheth) issue from the heart, or interior man; some from one, some from another part or region thereof; and the same from different parts: sometimes natural temper, sometimes false opinion, sometimes evil custom is the root of the same kind of disease; and it is expedient we should know distinctly which of them in particular cases is the root, that accordingly we may understand what method of cure to use, whence to fetch the remedy, where to apply it; for unskilfulness in these points may frustrate our endeavours of amendment. If the mischief proceed from natural inclination, we must not hope ever utterly to subdue it, nor to free ourselves suddenly from the incursions thereof; nor is bare reasoning a proper weapon against it, it being grounded in the original constitution of the soul, either immediately, or as linked to the body; which by no operation of our mind can be soon altered; for, *No wisdom*, as Seneca speaketh well, *can remove the natural vices of body or mind; what is infixed and inbred may be allayed by art, not subdued* [d]. Reason alone and directly is not able to grapple therewith; she will break her teeth upon so tough and knotty matter: it will weary her arms in vain to swim against the rapid current of natural propension; the violent eruptions thereof may indeed somewhat be restrained; occasions of complying therewith may often be declined; it may in time, and by degrees, be weakened by subtracting the food and incentives thereof: but especially devils of this kind must, as our Saviour instructeth us, be ejected by humble, earnest, and frequent invocation of divine assistance; without which other means commonly will prove ineffectual. But if the vice proceed only from ill habit, or the prevalence of bad custom, we are to oppose a contrary custom thereto, presently disusing that practice, and acting otherwise, so shall we easily remove and extirpate it: if neither of these causes are discernible, we may presume

Matt. xv. 18.

Τί φθείρει τὸ ἦθος; ἐναντίον ἦθος. *Epict.*

[d] Nulla sapientia naturalia corporis aut animi vitia ponuntur: quicquid infixum et ingenitum est lenitur arte, non vincitur. *Sen. Ep.* 11.

our indisposition is derived from ill opinion; and that consequently our best course of redressing it, is to examine the reason of the thing; to get clear and right apprehensions concerning it. For example, if we observe ourselves apt to be frequently transported with anger, let us look into our hearts, and take notice whether the root of that distemper be a choleric complexion, or whether it arise from an habitual indulgence to ourselves of being moved upon slight causes, whereby a peevish humour is grown upon us; or whether it cometh from vain conceits of ourselves, as of persons unto whom extraordinary deference and observance is due, so that no man should presume to dissent from our opinion, or contravene our desire; and as we find, so we must respectively proceed in repressing the causes of this disease; praying, if it arise from nature, to the Omnipotent, (the only Lord and Commander of nature,) that he would by his grace free us from that inflammable temper, and enable us to govern our passion; withal shunning occasions of being provoked; abstaining from such diet, such business, such company, as naturally do kindle or ferment that humour: if the malady grow from custom, using ourselves to bear patiently harsh words, unkind dealings, cross accidents; if our opinion dispose us thereto, reasoning ourselves into moderate conceits about ourselves, considering the reasons that may acquit or excuse others to us upon occasion of offence: using all, or some of these means, or the like, such as the observation of our heart shall discover to us to be most proper and suitable to the nature or to the cause of this distemper infesting us, we shall wholly, or in good part, rid ourselves from it. Again, (to adjoin another example, the matter seeming to deserve our heed,) suppose we experience ourselves inclining to covetousness, eager in getting, solicitous in keeping, unwilling to part with our goods upon reasonable occasion, (for the maintenance of our convenient respect in the world, or for relieving the needs of our brethren, or for serving the public, or for promoting the interests of piety and virtue;) let us then look, and see whether this ariseth from a natural straitness, hardness, suspi-

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ciousness, or diffidence of heart, (some such dispositions may be observed in men,) or from being, by our education, or manner of life, enured to such a love of getting, or of sparing, or of tenacity; or whether it springs from conceits about the worth, or the necessity of wealth, (that, without being furnished with heaps of treasure, we shall come into danger of want or disgrace; we shall not be able to maintain our life, or uphold our credit; we shall not enjoy any thing, or be any bodies among men;) let us, I say, by examining our hearts, find out from which of these springs this sordid disposition floweth, and accordingly strive to correct it; either praying to Almighty God, that he would enlarge and supple our heart, if it be natural to us; or addicting ourselves upon reasonable occasion to liberality and free expence, if custom hath therein prevailed upon us; or if vain surmises have seduced us, rectifying our judgments; as by other good discourses, proper against that brutish vice, so especially by considering that God is most good and bountiful, and tender of our being overwhelmed with need; that he continually watcheth over us, so that he cannot but see, and will regard what we want; and that he faithfully hath promised, if we endeavour to please him, and use a moderate diligence in honest ways to maintain ourselves, that he will yield his blessing, and never will leave us destitute. So in all cases we may proceed discreetly in the cure of our spiritual, and in withstanding the temptations to sin, that assault us, if we do but search into our hearts, and learn thence, whence they flow, and by what they are nourished

10. This practice farther doth particularly serve to regulate our devotions, and performances more immediately spiritual, by shewing us what we need to pray for, what we are obliged to give thanks for, what it becomes us to confess and deprecate; for want thereof we shall be apt not only to neglect, but indecently to confound, yea miserably to pervert these duties; to confound them by praying for what is already given us, is put into our hand, or lies within our reach; for which therefore we are not to pray, but to render thanks; also by giving thanks for-

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mally for that, which perhaps we are far from possessing, and do most want; so, I say, we shall be apt to confound and misplace, to render vain and chimerical in a sort our spiritual addresses, as wanting due ground and object; yea to pervert them by asking for things really prejudicial and hurtful to us, (in the circumstances we stand,) and thanking God for what in anger and judgment he dispenseth to us, (so indeed are many appearing goods, grateful to present sense,) as also deprecating things most beneficial and useful, and healthful to our souls; neglecting to return thanks for what God disposeth in mercy, (so are many things at present bitter and unsavoury to our carnal appetite and fancy;) thus from ignorance of ourselves, and what we truly need, are we apt to pervert our devotions, not only defeating ourselves of the advantages they might yield us, but (if God be not more gracious than to hearken to us, and to grant our wishes[e]) bringing lamentable mischief on ourselves. Many examples of these confusions and perverse misapplications of devotion both Scripture affords, and experience will suggest, if we observe them. You know the comparison in the Gospel between the devotions of the Pharisee and the Publican, with the different acceptance they found: the one was prompt enough to give thanks for the graces he had received, and the advantages he conceived that he had in his qualities, and in his performances above others; but not having duly studied himself, did not perceive, that he was rather bound to ask pardon for the pride of his heart, and the vanity that adhered to his performances, which rendered his thanksgiving very improper and unseasonable. The other being conscious of his demerits and wants, with a manner suitable to his condition, in words few, but full and fit, did confess his unworthiness, (which to do did best beseem him,) and implored mercy, (which was the thing he chiefly needed;) so was his discreet prayer better accepted, than the other's impertinent thanksgiving: *I tell you*, saith our Saviour, *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.* The two

Psal. lxxiii. 18. Heb. xii. 11.

Luke xvii.

Luke xviii. 14.

[e] Evertère domos totas optantibus ipsis
Dii faciles, &c. *Juv. Sat.* 10.

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sons of Zebedee, conceiting that our Lord would shortly become a great prince, and affecting to become favourites then, did confidently sue for the next place of dignity about him; our Lord repressed their fond ambition by downright telling them first, that *they knew not what they asked;* then by demanding of them whether they were able to undergo the trials they should meet with; implying what they should rather have requested, that they more needed humility and patience, than pomp and pleasure: and it was the same two persons whose intemperate zeal he otherwise checked with an ἐκ οἴδατε οἵου πνεύματος, *Ye know not of what spirit ye are:* and no wonder, if they, who knew not what they were, did ask they knew not what; that, being ignorant of their own hearts, they should endite absurd petitions; that in such a case they should desire things not only incongruous and inconvenient, but dangerous and destructive to themselves. For to make a right distinction of these duties; to be able discreetly and pertinently, if I may so speak, to converse with God, it is requisite to look into our hearts, and from them to take fit matter, due measure, right season of request, and of acknowledgment respectively; things commonly not being as they appear to our present sense, or to our gross conceit, in themselves, or in their degree, good or bad; but according to the disposition of our hearts, and the effects they work upon them. That is not good, which pleaseth our sense and fancy; nor that bad, which disgusts them; but that is good, which rendereth our heart wiser and better, which correcteth our inclinations, composeth our affections, informeth our judgments rightly, and purifieth our intentions; that is bad, which hath contrary effects within us. We, it is likely, should pray with greatest seriousness and earnestness for the removal of those infirmities, for ease from those afflictions; which we see the holy Apostles (being better instructed in things, being more acquainted with themselves) did rejoice, did glory in, did give thanks for; as finding the wholesome operation they had upon their hearts; that by them their virtues were exercised and improved, their faith tried,

Matt. xx. 21.

Luke xi. 55.

Jam. i. 2. Rom. v. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Gal. vi. 14. 1 Pet. i. 6.

their patience increased, their hope confirmed; that, to use the Apostle's words, they did *in the sequel return the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who were exercised by them:* but leaving this point, though deserving perhaps farther consideration, I proceed, and say farther, that, SERM. XLV. Heb. xii. 11.

11. The continual visitation of our inward parts doth not only yield much advantage, (as in some measure hath been shewed,) at the long-run, by influence at the spring-head upon the principles and causes of action, but doth immediately conduce to good practice, preventing and stifling in the very birth many sinful and vain practices: that so many indiscreet and impertinent, so many irregular and unsavoury, so many unjust and uncharitable speeches do issue from our mouths, it is especially because we are not then employed upon this duty; are not watching over our hearts, and observing those inward fountains, (levity and wantonness of thought, precipitancy and disorder of passion) from whence they overflow: were we intent there, we should perhaps endeavour to stop the current, and contain these inward bad motions from venting themselves. The like we may say concerning many unwarrantable actions, into which we inconsiderately plunge ourselves, not heeding whence they spring: did we regard that such actions were arising from ambitious, covetous, froward dispositions, or from certain ill-grounded prejudices lurking in our minds, we should often surely forbear them: but while we keep none, or bad sentinels; while in the custody of our hearts we sleep, or are drowsy; while we neglect to examine and weigh our actions what they are, and whence they come, they (although very bad and hurtful) do steal by us, and pass as friends, and we hear no more of them, but in their woful consequences. What efficacy the consideration of God's omnipresent eye, beholding all our doings, hath, and how all wise men do press it as a powerful means to contain us from bad action, you cannot but well know; as likewise that some of them, in order to the same purpose, direct us to conceive ourselves always under the inspection of some person espe-

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cially venerable for his worth, or for his relation to us, whom we should be afraid or ashamed to displease: and surely were the faith concerning God's presence, or the fancy concerning the presence of a Cato, or a Lælius, strong enough, they could not but have great effect: however, did we but live, even in our own presence, under the eye of our own judgment and conscience; regarding not only the matter and body, but the reason and ground, that is the soul, of our actings; even that would do much; the love and reverence of ourselves would somewhat check and control us; we should fear to offend, we should be ashamed to vilify even ourselves by fond or foul proceedings; it would, in the philosopher's esteem, supply the room of any other keeper or monitor, if we could thus keep ourselves; *If*, saith he, *we have so far profited, as to have got a reverence of ourselves, we may then well let go a tutor, or pedagogue.*

Sen. Ep. xi. 25.

Sen. Ep. 25.

Cum jam profeceris tantum, ut sit tibi etiam tui reverentia, licebit dimittas pædagogum. *Ibid.*

12. This practice doth much conduce to the knowledge of human nature, and the general dispositions of mankind, which is an excellent and most useful part of wisdom: for the principal inclinations and first motions of the soul are like in all men; whence he that by diligent study of himself hath observed them in his own soul, may thence collect them to be in others; he hath at least a great advantage of easily tracing them, of soon descrying them, of clearly perceiving them in those he converseth with; the which knowledge is of great use, as directing us how to accommodate ourselves in our behaviour and dealing with others.

No man indeed can be a good instructor or adviser in moral affairs, who hath not attained this skill, and doth not well understand the nature of man: his precepts and rules will certainly be fallacious, or misapplied without it: this is that, which rendered the dictates of the Stoics and other such philosophers so extravagant and unpracticable, because they framed them not according to the real nature of man, such as is existent in the world, but according to an idea formed in their own imaginations.

Some caution indeed is in this matter to be used, that

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those motions of soul which proceed from particular temper and complexion, from supervenient principles or habits, may be distinguished from those which are natural and common unto all: which distinction to make is of great use and benefit, in order to the governing, restraining, or correcting them.

If there be any in us, which are not observable in any other men; or in other men, which are not in us, those do not arise from common nature, but from the particular disposition of one or other respectively.

13. I add lastly, that universally this practice is requisite and necessary for the well governing of our heart. Politicians inculcate much, that to the well governing of a people, squaring fit laws for it, and keeping it in good order, the nature and humour of that people should be chiefly heeded and well understood; for that the grave Romans, and light Greeks; the soft Persians, and stout Germans; the subtle Africans, and gross Scythians, would not be well managed in the same manner. So to govern any man's heart, (since the hearts of men, as their faces, and as their voices, differ according to diversities of complexion, of age, of education, of custom and manner of living,) it conduceth to know how it is disposed from any of those, or the like causes. But how we are to guide and govern our hearts, and what particular influence this practice hath thereupon, I reserve for other meditations; when we shall endeavour more distinctly to shew how we may apply our thoughts to due objects; how curb and correct our inclinations; how order our passions; how rectify our opinions; how purify our intentions; now I conclude with the good Psalmist's requests to God Almighty: *Teach us thy way, O Lord; unite our hearts to fear thy name. Give us understanding, and we shall keep thy law; yea, we shall observe it with our whole heart. Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts; see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.* Amen.

Vid. Naz. Orat. 1.

Ps. lxxxvi. 11. Ps. cxix. 34. Ps. cxxxix. 23.

SERMON XLVI.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

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THIS Psalm is upon several peculiar accounts very remarkable; for its antiquity, in which it perhaps doth not yield to any parcel of Scripture; for the eminency of its author, Moses, the man of God, the greatest of the ancient Prophets, (most in favour, and, as it were, most intimate with God:) it is also remarkable for the form and matter thereof, both affording much useful instruction. In it we have a great prince, the governor of a numerous people, sequestering his mind from the management of public affairs to private meditations; from beholding the present outward appearances, to considering the real nature and secret causes of things; in the midst of all the splendour and pomp, of all the stir and tumult about him, he observes the frailty of human condition, he discerns the providence of God justly ordering all; this he does not only in way of wise consideration, but of serious devotion, moulding his observations into pious acknowledgments and earnest prayers to God: thus while he casts one eye upon earth viewing the occurrences there, lifting up the other to heaven, there seeing God's all-governing hand, thence seeking his gracious favour and mercy. Thus doth here that great and good man teach us all (more particularly

men of high estate and much business) to find opportunities of withdrawing their thoughts from those things, which commonly amuse them, (the cares, the glories, the pleasures of this world,) and fixing them upon matters more improveable to devotion; the transitoriness of their condition, and their subjection to God's just providence; joining also to these meditations suitable acts of religion, due acknowledgments to God, and humble prayers. This was his practice among the greatest incumbrances that any man could have; and it should also be ours. Of those his devotions, addressed to God, the words are part, which I have chosen for the subject of my meditation and present discourse; concerning the meaning of which I shall first touch somewhat; then propound that observable in them, which I design to insist upon. SERM. XLVI.

The Prophet David hath in the 39th Psalm a prayer very near in words, and of kin, it seems, in sense to this here; *Lord*, prays he, *make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am:* concerning the drift of which place, as well as of this here, it were obvious to conceive that both these Prophets do request of God, that he would discover to them the definite term of their life, (which by his decree he had fixed, or however by his universal prescience he did discern; concerning which we have these words in Job, *Seeing man's days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass;)* we might, I say, at first hearing, be apt to imagine, that their prayer unto God is, (for the comfort of their mind burdened with afflictions, or for their better direction in the management of their remaining time of life,) that God would reveal unto them the determinate length of their life. But this sense, which the words seem so naturally to hold forth, is by many of the Fathers rejected, for that the knowledge of our lives' determinate measure is not a fit matter of prayer to God; that being a secret reserved by God to himself, which to inquire into savours of presumptuous curiosity: the universal validity of which reason I will not debate; but shall defer so much

Ps. xxxix. 4.

Job xiv. 5.

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to their judgment, as to suppose that the numbering of our days (according to their sense) doth here only imply a confused indefinite computation of our days' number, or the length of our life; such as, upon which it may appear, that necessarily our life cannot be long, (not, according to the account mentioned in this Psalm, the same with that of Solon in Herodotus, above 70 or 80 years, especially as to purposes of health, strength, content;) will probably, by reason of various accidents, to which it is exposed, be much shorter, (7 or 10 years, according to a moderate esteem;) may possibly, from surprises undiscoverable, be very near to its period; by few instants removed from death, (a year, a month, a day, it may be somewhat less.) This I shall allow to be the arithmetic that Moses here desires to learn; whence it will follow, that teaching (or making to know, so it is in the Hebrew) doth import here (as it doth otherwhere frequently in Scripture,) God's affording the grace to know practically, or with serious regard to consider this state and measure of our life, (for in speculation no man can be ignorant of human life's brevity and uncertainty; but most men are so negligent and stupid, as not to regard it sufficiently, not to employ this knowledge to any good purpose [a].) This interpretation I choose, being in itself plausible enough, and countenanced by so good authority; yet the former might well enough (by good consequence, if not so immediately) serve my design; or be a ground able to support the discourse I intend to build upon the words; the subject whereof briefly will be this, that the consideration of our lives' certain and necessary brevity and frailty, is a mean proper and apt to dispose us toward the wise conduct of our remaining life; to which purpose such a consideration seems alike available, as the knowledge of its punctual or definite measure; or more than it, upon the same, or greater reasons.

[a] Οὐ γάρ ἐστι φρένας ἔχοντος ἀνθρώπου ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ζῷόν ἐστι θνητόν, εἰδ' ὅτι γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ἀποθανεῖν. *Plut. ad Apoll.* p. 202.

Quis est tam stultus, quamvis sit adolescens, cui sit exploratum se vel ad vesperum esse victurum? *Cic. de Sen.*

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As for the latter clause, *that we may apply our hearts to wisdom;* it is according to the Hebrew, *and we shall bring the heart to wisdom;* implying, the application of our hearts to wisdom to be consequent upon the skill and practice (bestowed by God) of thus computing our days. As for wisdom, that may denote either sapience, a habit of knowing what is true; or prudence, a disposition of choosing what is good: we may here understand both, especially the latter; for, as Tully saith of philosophy, *Omnis summa philosophiæ ad beate vivendum refertur*, the sum or whole of philosophy refers to living happily; so all divine wisdom doth respect good practice. The word also comprehends all the consequences and adjuncts of such wisdom; (for so commonly such words are wont, by way of metonymy, to denote, together with the things primarily signified, all that naturally flows from, or that usually are conjoined with them:) in brief, (to cease from more explaining that which is in itself conspicuous enough,) I so understand the text, as if the Prophet had thus expressed himself: Since, O Lord, all things are in thy hand and sovereign disposal; since it appears that man's life is so short and frail, so vexatious and miserable, so exposed to the just effects of thy displeasure; we humbly beseech thee, so to instruct us by thy wisdom, so to dispose us by thy grace, that we may effectually know, that we may seriously consider the brevity and uncertainty of our lives' durance; whence we may be induced to understand, regard, and choose those things which good reason dictates best for us; which, according to true wisdom, it most concerns us to know and perform. From which sense of the words we might infer many useful documents, and draw matter of much wholesome discourse; but passing over all the rest, I shall only insist upon that one point, which I before intimated, viz. that the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a proper instrument conducible to the bringing our hearts to wisdom, to the making us to discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things as are truly best for us; that it is available to the prudent conduct and management of our

De Fin. ii. p. 95.

Natura dedit usuram vitæ, tanquam pecuniæ, nulla præstituta die. *Tusc. Quæst.* i. p. 326.

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life; the truth of which proposition is grounded upon the divine Prophet's opinion: he apprehended such a knowledge or consideration to be a profitable means of inducing his heart to wisdom; wherefore he prays God to grant it him in order to that end, supposing that effect would proceed from this cause. And that it is so in way of reasonable influence, I shall endeavour to shew by some following reasons.

1 John ii. 17. Love not the world; for—the world passeth away, and the desire thereof.

I. The serious consideration of our lives' frailty and shortness will confer to our right valuation (or esteem) of things, and consequently to our well placing, and our duly moderating our cares, affections, and endeavours about them. For as we value things, so are we used to affect them, to spend our thought upon them, to be earnest in pursuance or avoiding of them. There be two sorts of things we converse about, good and bad; the former, according to the degree of their appearance so to us, (that is, according to our estimation of them,) we naturally love, delight in, desire, and pursue; the other likewise, in proportion to our opinion concerning them, we do more or less loathe and shun. Our actions, therefore, being all thus directed and grounded, to esteem things aright both in kind and degree, (ἑκάστῳ ἀποδιδοναι τὴν ἀξίαν, to assign every thing its due price, as Epictetus speaks; *quanti quidque sit judicare*, to judge what each thing is worth, as Seneca [b],) is in order the first, in degree a main part of wisdom; and as so is frequently by wise men commended. Now among qualities that commend or vilify things unto us, duration and certainty have a chief place; they often alone suffice to render things valuable or contemptible. Why is gold more precious than glass or crystal? Why prefer we a ruby before a rose, or a gilliflower? It is not because those are more serviceable, more beautiful, more grateful to our senses, than these, (it is plainly otherwise;) but because these are brittle and fading, those solid and

[b] Primum est, ut quanti quidque sit judices; secundum, ut impetum ad illa capias ordinatum temperatumque; tertium, ut inter impetum tuum, actionemque conveniat, ut in omnibus istis tibi ipsi consentias. *Sen. Ep.* 89.

permanent: these we cannot hope to retain the use or pleasure of long; those we may promise ourselves to enjoy so long as we please. Whence on the other side is it, that we little fear or shun any thing, how painful, how offensive soever, being assured of its soon passing over, the biting of a flea, or the prick in letting blood? The reason is evident; and that in general nothing can on either hand be considerable (either to value or disesteem) which is of a short continuance. Upon this ground, therefore, let us tax the things concerning us, whether good or bad, relating to this life, or to our future state; and first the good things relating to this life; thence we shall be disposed to judge truly concerning them, what their just price is, how much of affection, care, and endeavour they deserve to have expended on them. In general, and in the lump concerning them all, St. Paul tells us, that τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου παράγει, *the* shape or *fashion* (all that is apparent or sensible) in *this present world doth flit, and soon gives us the go-by:* we gaze awhile upon these things, as *in transitu*, or *intra conspectum*, as they pass by us[c], and keep a while in sight; but they are presently gone from us, or we from them. They are but like objects represented in a glass; which having viewed a while, we must shortly turn our backs, or shut our eyes upon them, then all vanishes, and disappears unto us. Whence he well infers an indifferency of affection toward them; a slackness in the enjoyment of them to be required of us; a *using this world as if we used it not;* a *buying, as if we were not to possess;* a *weeping as if we wept not;* and a *rejoicing as if we rejoiced not;* a kind of negligence and unconcernedness about these things. *The world*, saith St. John, *passeth away, and the desire thereof;* whatever seemeth most lovely and desirable in the world is very flitting; however our desire and our enjoyment thereof must suddenly cease. Imagine a man, therefore, possessed of all worldly goods, armed with power, flourishing in credit, flowing with plenty, swim-

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1 Cor. vii. 31.

1 John ii. 17. Ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ.

[c] ——πάντα παρέρχεται ἡμᾶς,
Εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ πάντα παρερχόμεθα. *Gr. Epig. Anthol.*

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ming in all delight, (such as were sometime Priamus, Polycrates, Crœsus, Pompey;) yet since he is withal supposed a man and mortal, subject both to fortune and death, none of those things can he reasonably confide or much satisfy himself in; they may be violently divorced from him by fortune, they must naturally be loosed from him by death; the closest union here cannot last longer than till death us depart: wherefore no man upon such account can truly call or (if he consider well) heartily esteem himself happy; a *man cannot* hence (as the most able judge and trusty voucher of the commodities doth pronounce) *receive profit or content from any labour he taketh* (upon these transitory things) *under the sun.* Why then, let me inquire, do we so cumber our heads with care, so rack our hearts with passion, so waste our spirits with incessant toil about these transitory things? Why do we so highly value, so ardently desire, so eagerly pursue, so fondly delight in, so impatiently want, or lose, so passionately contend for and emulate one another in regard to these bubbles; forfeiting and foregoing our homebred most precious goods, tranquillity and repose, either of mind or body for them? Why erect we such mighty fabrics of expectation and confidence upon such unsteady sands? Why dress we up these our inns, as if they were our homes, and are as careful about a few nights' lodging here, as if we designed an everlasting abode? (we that are but *sojourners and pilgrims* here, and have no *fixed habitation* upon earth; who *come forth like a flower, and are soon cut down; flee like a shadow, and continue not; are winds passing away, and coming not again; who fade all like a leaf; whose life is a vapour appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away: whose days are a handbreadth, and age is nothing; whose days are consumed like smoke, and years are spent as a tale; who wither like the grass*, upon which we feed, *and crumble as the dust*, of which we are compacted; for thus the Scripture by apposite comparisons represents our condition;) yet we build, like the men of Agrigentum, as if we were to dwell here for ever; and hoard up, as if we were to enjoy after many

Eccl. i. 3. &c.

Commorandi natura nobis diversorium dedit, non habitandi locum. *Cic. de Sen.*

1 Pet. ii. 11, 1. Heb. xiii. 11. xi. 15. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Job xiv. 1. Ps. lxxviii. 39. Jam. iv. 14. Is. lxiv. 6. Psal. cii. 3. xc. 5. 9. ciii. 15. xxxix. 5. cxliv. 4. cxix. 19. Psal. ciii. 15. Is. xl. 6.

ages; and inquire, as if we would never have done knowing. The citizens of Croton, a town in Italy, had a manner, it is said, of inviting to feasts a year before the time, that the guests in appetite and garb might come well prepared to them. Do we not usually resemble them in this ridiculous solicitude and curiosity: *spes inchoando longas*, commencing designs, driving on projects, which a longer time than our life would not suffice to accomplish? How deeply do we concern ourselves in all that is said or done; when the morrow all will be done away and forgotten; when (excepting what our duty to God and charity towards men requires of us, and that which concerns our future eternal state) what is done in the world, who gets or loses, which of the spokes in fortune's wheel is up, and which down, is of very little consequence to us! But the more to abstract our minds from, and temper our affections about these secular matters, let us examine particularly by this standard, whether the most valued things in this world deserve that estimate which they bear in the common market, or which popular opinion assigns them. SERM. XLVI.

1. To begin then with that which takes chief place, which the world most doats on, which seems most great and eminent among men; secular state and grandeur, might and prowess, honour and reputation, favour and applause of men, all the objects of human pride and ambition: of this kind, St. Peter thus pronounces, πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου. *All the glory of men is as the flower of the grass; the grass is dried up, and the flower thereof doth fall off;* it is as the flower of the grass, how specious soever, yet the most fading and failing part thereof: the grass itself will soon wither, and the flower doth commonly fall off before that. We cannot hold this flower of worldly glory beyond our short time of life; and we may easily much sooner be deprived of it: many tempests of fortune may beat it down, many violent hands may crop it; it is apt of itself to fade upon the stalk; however the sun (the influence of age and time) will assuredly burn and dry it up, with our life that upholds it. *Surely*, saith the Psalmist, *men of low degree are vanity, and men* 1 Pet. ii. 24. Psal. lxii. 9.

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of high degree are a lie: men of high degree; the mighty princes, the famous captains, the subtile statesmen, the grave senators; they who turn and toss about the world at their pleasure; who, in the Prophet's language, *make the earth tremble, and shake kingdoms:* even these, they are a lie, (said he, who himself was none of the least considerable among them, and by experience well knew their condition, the greatest and most glorious man of his time, King David.) They are a lie: that is, their state presents something of brave and admirable to the eye of men; but it is only *deceptio visus;* a shew without a substance; it doth but delude the careless spectators with false appearance; it hath nothing under it solid or stable; being laid in the balance, (the royal Prophet there subjoins: that is, being weighed in the scales of right judgment, being thoroughly considered,) it will prove lighter than vanity itself; it is less valuable than mere emptiness, and nothing itself. That saying sounds like an hyperbole; but it may be true in a strict sense, seeing that the care and pains in maintaining it, the fear and jealousy of losing it, the envy, obloquy, and danger that surround it, the snares it hath in it, and temptations inclining men to be puffed up with pride, to be insolent and injurious, to be corrupted with pleasure, (with other bad concomitants thereof,) do more than countervail whatever either of imaginary worth or real convenience may be in it. Perhaps, could it, without much care, trouble, and hazard, continue for ever, or for a long time, it might be thought somewhat considerable: but since its duration is uncertain and short; since *man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish;* that they who look so *like gods*, and are called so, and are worshipped as so, *yet must die like men*, like men, yea *like sheep shall be laid in the grave;* since, as it is said of the king of Babylon in Isaiah, *their pomp must be brought down to the grave, and the noise of their viols; the worm shall be spread under them, and the worm shall cover them;* seeing that a moment of time shall extinguish all their lustre, and still all that tumult about them; that they must be disrobed of their purple, and be clothed with corruption; that their so spa-

Is. xiv. 17.

Psal. lxxxii. 6.

Ps. xlix. 12, &c.

Is. xiv. 11.

cious and splendid palaces must soon be exchanged for close darksome coffins; that both their own breath, and the breath of them who now applaud them, must be stopped; that they who now bow to them, may presently trample on them; and they, who to-day trembled at their presence, may the morrow scornfully insult upon their memory: *Is this the man* (will they say, as they did of that great king) *who made the earth to tremble; that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the kingdoms thereof?* Since this is the fate of the greatest and most glorious among men, what reason can there be to admire their condition, to prize such vain and short-lived pre-eminences? For who can account it a great happiness to be styled and respected as a prince, to enjoy all the powers and prerogatives of highest dignity for a day or two; then being obliged to descend into a sordid and despicable estate? Who values the fortune of him that is brought forth upon the stage to act the part of a prince; though he be attired there, and attended as such, hath all the garb and ceremony, the ensigns and appertenances of majesty about him; speaks and behaves himself imperiously, is flattered and worshipped accordingly; yet who in his heart doth adore this idol, doth admire this mockery of greatness? Why not? Because after an hour or two the play is over, and this man's reign is done. And what great difference is there between this and the greatest worldly state? between Alexander in the history, and Alexander on the stage? Are not (in the Psalmist's account) *all our years spent as a tale that is told*, or as a fable that is acted? This in comparison of that, what is it at most, but telling the same story, acting the same part a few times over? What are a few years more than a few hours repeated not very often? not so often as to make any considerable difference: so a great emperor reflected; τί διαφέρει τριήμερος τριγενηνίου; *What*, said he, *doth the age of an infant, dying within three days, differ from that of Nestor, who lived three ages of men?* since both shall be past and ended; both then meet, and thereby become equal; since, considering the immense time that runs on, and how little

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Is. xiv. 16.

Psal. xc.

Anton. iv. 50.

Sen. Ep. xcix. 24.

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a part thereof any of us takes up, *(juvenes et senes in æquo sumus)* we are all alike young and old, as a drop and a pint bottle in compare to the ocean are in a sort equal, that is, both altogether inconsiderable [d]. *Quid enim diu est, ubi finis est?* saith St. Austin: *what can be long that shall be ended?* which coming to that pass is as if it never had been? Since then upon this account (upon worldly accounts I speak all this; and excepting that dignity and power may be talents bestowed by God, or advantages to serve God, and promote the good of men; excepting also the relation persons justly instated in them bear to God, as his deputies and ministers; in which respects much reverence is due to their persons, much value to their places; even the more, by how much less their present outward estate is considerable, and because at present they receive so slender a reward for all their cares and pains employed in the discharge of their offices; this I interpose to prevent mistake, lest our discourse should seem to disparage or detract from the reverence due to persons in eminent place. But since, under this caution) all worldly power and glory appear so little valuable, the consideration hereof may avail to moderate our affections about them, to quell all ambitious desires of them, and all vain complacencies in them. For why should we so eagerly seek and pursue such empty shadows, which if we catch, we in effect catch nothing; and whatever it is, doth presently slip out of our hands? Why do we please ourselves in such evanid dreams? Is it not much better to rest quiet and content in any station wherein God hath placed us, than to trouble ourselves and others in climbing higher to a precipice, where we can hardly stand upright, and whence we shall certainly tumble down into the grave? This consideration is also a remedy, proper to remove all regret and envy grounded upon such regards. For why, though suppose men of small worth or virtue should flourish in honour and power, shall we repine thereat? Is it not as if one should

[d] Mihi ne diuturnum quidem quidquam videtur, in quo est aliquid extremum, &c. *Cic. de Senect.*

envy to a butterfly its gaudy wings, to a tulip its beautiful colours, to the grass its pleasant verdure; that grass, to which in this Psalm we are compared; *which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening is cut down and withereth?* I may say of this discourse with the philosopher, ἰδιωτικὸν μέν, ὅμως δὲ ἀνυτικὸν βοήθημα, it is a homely remedy, (there may be divers better ones,) yet hath its efficacy; for David himself made use thereof more than once: *Be not*, saith he, *afraid*, or troubled, *when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend with him. I was*, saith he again, *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked; but I went into the sanctuary, then understood I their end; surely thou didst set them in slippery places—how are they brought into desolation as in a moment!* Thus considering the lubricity and transitoriness of that prosperity, which foolish and wicked men enjoyed, did serve to cure that envious distemper which began to affect the good man's heart.

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Psal. xc. 6.

Ant. iv. §. 50.

Psal. xlix. 16.

Psal. lxxiii. 3, 17. xxxvii. 1.

2. But let us descend from dignity and power (that is, from names and shews,) to somewhat seeming more real and substantial, to riches; that great and general idol, the most devoutly adored that ever any hath been in the world; which hath a temple almost in every house, an altar in every heart; to the gaining of which most of the thoughts, most of the labours of men immediately tend; in the possession of which men commonly deem the greatest happiness doth consist. But this consideration we discourse about, will easily discover, that even this, as all other idols, is *nothing in the world*, nothing true and solid; will, I say, justify that advice, and verify that assertion of the Wise Man: *Labour not for riches; wilt thou set thy heart upon that which is not?* it, well applied, will pluck down the high places reared to this great idol of clay in men's hearts; will confute the common conceits and phrases, which so beatify wealth; shewing that whoever doats thereon is more truly and properly styled a miserable man, than a happy or blessed one: for is he not indeed miserable, who *makes lies his refuge*, who confides in that

1 Cor. viii. 4.

Prov. xxiii. 5.

Ὄλβιος, Beatus, &c. pro divite.

Hab. ii. 9.

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which will deceive and disappoint him? The Prophet assures us so: *Wo*, saith the prophet Habakkuk, *wo be to him who coveteth an evil covetousness to his house; that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil.* Men, he implies, imagine by getting riches, they have secured and raised themselves above the reach of all mischief: but ye see it was in the Prophet's judgment a woful mistake. St. Paul doth warn men, very emphatically, *not to hope*, ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, *in the uncertainty*, or obscurity, *of riches*; intimating, that to trust in them, is to trust in darkness itself; in that wherein we can discern nothing; in we know not what. They are, we cannot but observe, subject to an infinity of chances, many of them obvious and notorious; more of them secret and unaccountable. *They make*, the Wise Man tells us, *themselves wings*, (they need, it seems, no help for that,) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven*, (quite out of sight, and beyond our reach, they of their own accord do swiftly fly away:) however, should they be disposed to say with us, we must fly from them; were they inseparably affixed to this life, yet must they together with that be severed from us; as we came naked of them into this world, so naked shall we return: *As he came*, saith the Preacher, *so shall he go; and what profit* (then) *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* from hence, that we must so soon part with riches, he infers them to be but wind; a thing not anywise to be fixed or settled; which it is vain to think we can appropriate or retain; and vain therefore greedily to covet, or pursue: so the Psalmist also reasons it: *Surely every man*, saith he, *walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.* Men, in his account, that troubled themselves in accumulating wealth, did but idly delude themselves, fancying to receive content from such things, which they must themselves soon be separated from; and leave at uncertainties, to be disposed of they know not how: that which in his wise son's esteem was sufficient to make *a man hate all his labour under the sun: Because*, saith he, *I shall leave it to the man that shall be after me; and who*

1 Tim. vi. 19.

Prov. xxiii. 5.

Job i. 21. xxvii. 19. 1 Tim. vi. 7. Eccl. v. 21.

Psal. xxxix. 6.

Eccl. ii. 18.

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knoweth, whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet he shall have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun: all, it seems, that we are so wise and so industrious about, that we so beat our heads about, and spend our spirits upon, is at most but *gaudium hæredis, the joy of an heir*, and that an uncertain one, (for your son, your kinsman, your friend, may, for all you can know, die before you, or soon after you;) [e] it is but a being at great pains and charges in tilling the land, and sowing and dressing it; whence we are sure not to reap any benefit to ourselves, and cannot know who shall do it.

The rich man, St. James tells us, *as the flower of the grass shall he pass away; for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion thereof perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade in his ways.* All the comfort (we see by the Apostle's discourse) and the convenience, all the grace and ornament, that riches are supposed to yield, will certainly wither and decay, either before or with us; whenever the sun (that is, either some extreme mischance in life, or the certain destiny of death) doth arise, and make impression on them. But our Saviour hath best set out the nature and condition of these things, in that parable concerning the man, who, having had a plentiful crop of corn, and having projected for the disposal of it, resolved then *to bless himself*, and entertain his mind with pleasing discourses, that having in readiness and security so copious accommodations, he might now enjoy himself with full satisfaction and delight; not considering, that, though his barns were full, his life was not sure; that God's pleasure might soon interrupt his pastime; that the fearful sentence might presently be pronounced: *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee; and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall?* Euripides calls riches φιλόψυχον χρῆμα, *a thing which much endears life*, or

Jam. i. 11.

Luke xii. 20.

Τὸ ἴσον.

[e] In his elaborant, quæ sciunt nihil omnino ad se pertinere; serunt arbores, quæ alteri seculo prosint. *Cic. de Senect.*

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makes men greatly love it; but they do not at all enable to keep it: there is no ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς, *no* price or *ransom equivalent to life: all that a man hath, he would give* to redeem it; but it is a purchase too dear for all the riches in the world to compass. So the Psalmist tells us: *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious.* They cannot redeem their brother's soul or life, nor therefore their own; for all souls are of the same value, all greatly surpass the price of gold and silver. Life was not given us for perpetuity, but lent, or deposited with us; and without delay or evasion it must be resigned into the hand of its just Owner, when he shall please to demand it; and although righteousness may, *yet riches*, as the Wise Man tells us, *cannot deliver from death, nor at all profit us in the day of wrath.* Could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands; nay, could we certainly foresee some considerably long definite time, in which we might enjoy our stores, it were perhaps somewhat excusable to scrape and hoard, it might look like rational providence, it might yield some valuable satisfaction: but since, *Rape, congere, aufer, posside, statim relinquendum est;* since, as Solomon tells us, *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to every generation;* yea, since they must be left very soon, nor is there any certainty of keeping them any time; that one day may consume them, one night may dispossess us of them and our life together with them, there can be no reason why we should be solicitous about them; no account given of our setting so high a rate upon them. For who would much regard the having custody of a rich treasure for a day or two, then to be stripped of all, and left bare? to be to-day invested in large domains, and to-morrow to be dispossessed of them? No man surely would be so fond, as much to affect the condition. Yet this is our case; whatever we call ours, we are but guardians thereof for a few days. This consideration therefore may serve to repress or moderate in us all covetous desires, proud conceits, vain

Psal. xlix.

Luke xii. 20.

Prov. xi. 4.

Prov. xxvii. 24.

Sen. Ep. 98.

confidences and satisfactions in respect to worldly wealth; to induce us, in Job's language, *not to make gold our hope, nor to say to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; not to rejoice because our wealth is great, and because our hand hath gotten much;* to extirpate from our hearts that root of all evil, the love of money. For if, as the Preacher thought, the greatest pleasure or benefit accruing from them, is but looking upon them for a while, (*what good,* saith he, *is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*) if a little will, nay must suffice our natural appetites, and our present necessities; if more than needs is but, as the Scripture teaches us, *a trouble*, disquieting our minds with care; *a* dangerous *snare*, drawing us into mischief and sorrow; if this, I say, be their present quality; and were it better, yet could it last for any certain, or any long continuance; is it not evidently better to enjoy that pittance God hath allotted us with ease and contentation of mind; or if we want a necessary supply, to employ only a moderate diligence in getting thereof by the fairest means, which, with God's blessing promised thereto, will never fail to procure a competence, and with this to rest content; than with those in Amos, *to pant after the dust of the earth; to lade ourselves with thick clay;* to thirst insatiably after floods of gold, to heap up mountains of treasure, to extend unmeasurably our possessions, (*joining house to house, and laying field to field, till there be no place, that we may be placed alone in the midst of the earth*, as the Prophet Isaiah doth excellently describe the covetous man's humour;) than, I say, thus incessantly to toil for the maintenance of this frail body, this flitting breath of ours? If divine bounty hath freely imparted a plentiful estate upon us, we should indeed bless God for it; *making ourselves friends* thereby, as our Saviour advises us, employing it to God's praise and service; to the relief and comfort of our brethren that need: but to seek it earnestly, to set our heart upon it, to rely thereon, to be greatly pleased or elevated in mind thereby, as it argues much infidelity and profaneness of heart, so it signifies much inconsiderateness

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Job xxxi. 24.

Eccl. v. 11.

Eccl. v. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 9.

Simplici cura constant necessaria, in delicias laboratur. Sen. Ep. 89.

Matt. vi. Heb. xiii. 15. 1 Tim. vi. 8. Psal. lv. 26. Amos ii. 6. Hab. ii. 6. Is. v. 8.

Luke xvi. 9.

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and folly, the ignorance of its nature, the forgetfulness of our own condition, upon the grounds discoursed upon.

3. Now in the next place; for pleasure, that great witch, which so enchants the world, and which by its mischievous baits so allures mankind into sin and misery; although this consideratian be not altogether necessary to disparage it, (its own nature sufficing to that; for it is more transitory than the shortest life, it dies in the very enjoyment,) yet it may conduce to our wise and good practice in respect thereto, by tempering the sweetness thereof, yea souring its relish to us; minding us of its insufficiency and unserviceableness to the felicity of a mortal creature; yea, its extremely dangerous consequences to a soul that must survive the short enjoyment thereof. Some persons indeed, ignorant or incredulous of a future state; presuming of no sense remaining after death, not regarding any account to be rendered of this life's actions, have encouraged themselves and others in the free enjoyment of present sensualities, upon the score of our life's shortness and uncertainty; inculcating such maxims as these:

Lucr. —— Brevis est hic fructus homullis;
—— post mortem nulla voluptas:

1 Cor. xv. 32. *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die;* because our life is short, let us make the most advantageous use thereof we can [f]; because death is uncertain, let us prevent its surprisal, and be aforehand with it, enjoying somewhat, before it snatches all from us. The Author of Wisdom observed, and thus represents these men's discourse: *Our life is short and tedious; and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave:—Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered:*

Sap. ii. 1, &c.

[f] Quem sors dierum cunque dabit, lucro
Appone; nec dulces amores
Sperne puer, &c. *Hor.* i. 9.

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let none of us go without his part of voluptuousness—for this is our portion, and our lot is this. Thus, and no wonder, have some men, conceiving themselves beasts, resolved to live as such; renouncing all sober care becoming men, and drowning their reason in brutish sensualities; yet no question, the very same reflection, that this life would soon pass away, and that death might speedily attack them, did not a little quash their mirth, and damp their pleasure. To think, that this perhaps might be the last banquet they should taste of; that they should themselves shortly become the feast of worms and serpents, could not but somewhat spoil the gust of their highest delicacies, and disturb the sport of their loudest jovialities; but, in Job's expression, *make the meat in their bowels to turn, and be as the gall of asps within them.* Those customary enjoyments did so enamour them of sensual delight, that they could not without pungent regret imagine a necessity of soon for ever parting with them; and so their very pleasure was by this thought made distasteful and embittered to them. So did the Wise Man observe: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions; unto the man that hath nothing to vex him; and that hath prosperity in all things; Yea*, adds he, *unto him, that is yet able to receive meat!* And how bitter then must the remembrance thereof be to him, who walloweth in all kind of corporal satisfaction and delight; that placeth all his happiness in sensual enjoyment! However, as to us, who are better instructed and affected; who know and believe a future state; the consideration, that the time of enjoying these delights will soon be over; that this world's jollity is but like *the crackling of thorns under a pot*, (which yields a brisk sound, and a cheerful blaze, but heats little, and instantly passes away;) that they leave no good fruits behind them, but do only corrupt and enervate our minds; war against and hurt our souls; tempt us to sin, and involve us in guilt; that, therefore, Solomon was surely in the right, when he said of *laughter*, that *it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?* (that is, that the highest of these delights are very irrational impertinences;) and of intem-

Job xx. 14.

Eccles. xli. 1.

Eccles. vii. 6.

Eccl. ii. 2.

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perance, that, at the last, *it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder;* with us, I say, who reflect thus, that (πρόσκαιρος ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσις) *enjoyment of sinful pleasure for a season* cannot obtain much esteem and love; but will rather, I hope, be despised and abhorred by us. I will add only,

Prov. xxiii. 32. Heb. xi. 25.

Δοκεῖ γὲν ἡ σοφία θαυμαστὰς ἡδονὰς ἔχειν καθαριότητι, καὶ σῷ βεβαίῳ. *Arist. Eth.* x. 7.

4. Concerning secular wisdom and knowledge; the which men do also commonly with great earnestness and ambition seek after, as the most specious ornament, and pure content of their mind; this consideration doth also detect the just value thereof; so as to allay intemperate ardour toward it, pride and conceitedness upon the having or seeming to have it, envy and emulation about it. For imagine, if you please, a man accomplished with all varieties of learning commendable, able to recount all the stories that have been ever written, or the deeds acted, since the world's beginning; to understand, or with the most delightful fluency and elegancy to speak all the languages, that have at any time been in use among the sons of men; skilful in twisting and untwisting all kinds of subtilties; versed in all sorts of natural experiments, and ready to assign plausible conjectures about the causes of them; studied in all books whatever, and in all monuments of antiquity; deeply knowing in all the mysteries of art, or science, or policy, such as have ever been devised by human wit, or study, or observation; yet all this, such is the pity, he must be forced presently to abandon; all the use he could make of all his notions, the pleasure he might find in them, the reputation accruing to him from them, must at that fatal minute vanish; *his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither he goeth. It is seen,* saith the Psalmist, seen, indeed, every day, and observed by all, *that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish person perisheth; one event happeneth to them both; there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever;* (both die alike, both alike are forgotten;) as the wisest man himself did (not without some distaste) observe.

Ps. cxlvi. 4. Eccl. ix. 10. Psal. xlix. 10. Eccl. ii. 14, 15, &c.

and complain. All our subtile conceits and nice criticisms, all our fine inventions and goodly speculations, shall be swallowed up either in the utter darkness, or in the clearer light of the future state. One potion of that Lethean cup (which we must all take down upon our entrance into that *land of forgetfulness*) will probably drown the memory, deface the shape of all those ideas, with which we have here stuffed our minds g: however they are not like to be of use to us in that new, so different, state; where none of our languages are spoken; none of our experience will suit; where all things have quite another face unknown, unthought of by us; where Aristotle and Varro shall appear mere idiots; Demosthenes and Cicero shall become very infants; the wisest and eloquentest Greeks will prove senseless and dumb barbarians; where all our authors shall have no authority; where we must all go fresh to school again; must unlearn, perhaps, what in these misty regions we thought ourselves best to know, and begin to learn what we not once ever dreamed of. Doth therefore I pray you, so transitory and fruitless a good (for itself I mean and excepting our duty to God, or the reasonable diligence we are bound to use in our calling) deserve such anxious desire, or so restless toil; so careful attention of mind, or assiduous pain of body about it? doth it become us to contend, or emulate so much about it? Above all, do we not most unreasonably, and against the nature of the thing itself we pretend to, (that is, ignorantly and foolishly,) if we are proud and conceited, much value ourselves or contemn others, in respect thereto? Solomon, the most experienced in this matter, and best able to judge thereof, (he that gave his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that had been done under heaven, and this with extreme success; even he,) passeth the same sentence of vanity, vexation, and unprofitableness, upon this, as upon all other sub-celestial things. True, he commends wisdom as an excellent and

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Ps. lxxxviii. 12.

g Τὴν δ' Ἰσοκράτης διατριβὴν ἐπισκώπτων, γηρᾶν φησι παρ' αὐτῷ τὰς μαθητάς, ὡς ἐν ᾅδου χρησομένας ταῖς τίχναις, καὶ δίκας ἰρῶντας. *Cato Sen. apud Plut.* p. 641. Edit. Steph.

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useful thing comparatively; *exceeding folly, so far as light exceedeth darkness;* but since light itself is not permanent, but must give way to darkness, the difference soon vanished, and his opinion thereof abated; considering, that as it happened to the fool, so it happened to him, he breaks in to that expostulation; *And why then was I more wise?* to what purpose was such a distinction made, that signified in effect so little? And, indeed, the testimony of this great personage may serve for a good epilogue to all this discourse, discovering sufficiently the slender worth of all earthly things: seeing he, that had given himself industriously to experiment the worth of all things here below, to sound the depth of their utmost perfection and use; who had all the advantages imaginable of performing it; who flourished in the greatest magnificences of worldly pomp and power; who enjoyed an incredible affluence of all riches; who tasted all varieties of most exquisite pleasure; whose heart was (by God's special gift, and by his own industrious care) enlarged with all kind of knowledge (furnished with notions many *as the sand upon the sea-shore*) above all that were before him; who had possessed and enjoyed all that fancy could conceive, or heart could wish, and had arrived to the top of secular happiness; yet even *he*, with pathetical reiteration, pronounces all to be *vanity and vexation of spirit;* altogether unprofitable and unsatisfactory to the mind of man. And so therefore we may justly conclude them to be; so finishing the first grand advantage this present consideration affordeth us in order to that wisdom, to which we should apply our hearts.

Διπλῶν ὀρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα.

Eccl. ii. 15.

1 Kings iv. 29.

I should proceed to gather other good fruits, which it is apt to produce, and contribute to the same purpose; but since my thoughts have taken so large scope upon that former head, so that I have already too much, I fear, exercised your patience, I shall only mention the rest. As this consideration doth, as we have seen, First, dispose us rightly to value these temporal goods, and moderate our affections about them; so it doth, Secondly, in like manner, conduce to the right estimation of temporal evils; and thereby to the well tempering our passions in the re-

sentment of them; to the begetting of patience and contentedness in our minds. Also, Thirdly, it may help us to value, and excite us to regard those things, good or evil, which relate to our future state; being the things only of a permanent nature, and of an everlasting consequence to us. Fourthly, it will engage us to husband carefully and well employ this short time of our present life: not to defer or procrastinate our endeavours to live well; not to be lazy and loitering in the dispatch of our only considerable business, relating to eternity; to embrace all opportunities, and improve all means, and follow the best compendiums of good practice leading to eternal bliss. Fifthly, it will be apt to confer much toward the begetting and preserving sincerity in our thoughts, words, and actions; causing us to decline all oblique designs upon present mean interests, or base regards to the opinions or affections of men; bearing single respects to our conscience and duty in our actions; teaching us to speak as we mean, and be what we would seem; to be in our hearts and in our closets, what we appear in our outward expressions and conversations with men. For considering, that within a very short time all the thoughts of our hearts shall be disclosed, and all the actions of our lives exposed to public view, (being strictly to be examined at the great bar of divine judgment before angels and men,) we cannot but perceive it to be the greatest folly in the world, for this short present time to disguise ourselves; to conceal our intentions, or smother our actions. What hath occurred, upon these important subjects, to my meditation, I must at present, in regard to your patience, omit. I shall close all with that good Collect of our Church.

Almighty God give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

SERMON XLVII.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto Wisdom.

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IN discoursing formerly upon these words, (expounded according to the most common and passable interpretation,) that which I chiefly observed was this: that the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a fit mean or rational instrument subservient to the bringing our hearts to wisdom; that is, to the making us discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things, as according to the dictates of right reason are truly best for us.

Job xiv. 14. All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

1. The truth of which observation I largely declared from hence, that the said consideration disposeth us to judge rightly about those goods, (which ordinarily court and tempt us, viz. worldly glory and honour; riches, pleasure, knowledge; to which I might have added wit, strength and beauty,) what their just worth and value is; and consequently to moderate our affections, our cares, our endeavours about them; for that if all those goods be uncertain and transitory, there can be no great reason to prize them much, or to affect them vehemently, or to spend much care and pains about them.

2. I shall next in the same scales weigh our temporal evils; and say, that also, The consideration of our lives'

brevity and frailty doth avail to the passing a true judgment of, and consequently to the governing our passions, and ordering our behaviour in respect to all those temporal evils, which either according to the law of our nature, or the fortuitous course of things, or the particular dispensation of Providence do befal us. Upon the declaration of which point I need not insist much, since what was before discoursed concerning the opposite goods doth plainly enough infer it; more immediately indeed in regard to the *mala damni*, or *privationis*, (the evils which consist only in the want or loss of temporal goods,) but sufficiently also by a manifest parity of reason in respect to the *mala sensus*, the real pains, crosses, and inconveniences that assail us in this life. For if worldly glory do hence appear to be no more than a transient blaze, a fading show, a hollow sound, a piece of theatrical pageantry, the want thereof cannot be very considerable to us. Obscurity of condition (living in a valley beneath that dangerous height, and deceitful lustre) cannot in reason be deemed a very sad or pitiful thing, which should displease or discompose us: if we may thence learn that abundant wealth is rather a needless clog, or a perilous snare, than any great convenience to us, we cannot well esteem to be poor a great infelicity, or to undergo losses a grievous calamity; but rather a benefit to be free from the distractions that attend it; to have little to keep for others, little to care for ourselves. If these present pleasures be discerned hence to be only wild fugitive dreams; out of which being soon roused we shall only find bitter regrets to abide; why should not the wanting opportunities of enjoying them be rather accounted a happy advantage, than any part of misery to us? If it seem, that the greatest perfection of curious knowledge, of what use or ornament soever, after it is hardly purchased, must soon be parted with; to be simple or ignorant will be no great matter of lamentation: as those will appear no solid goods, so these consequently must be only *umbræ malorum*, phantasms, or shadows of evil, rather than truly or substantially so; (evils created by fancy, and subsisting thereby; which reason should, and

Sen. Ep. 89.

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time will surely remove;) that in being impatient or disconsolate for them, we are but like children, that fret and wail for the want of petty toys. And for the more real or positive evils, such as violently assault nature, whose impressions no reason can so withstand, as to extinguish all distaste or afflictive sense of them; yet this consideration will aid to abate and assuage them; affording a certain hope and prospect of approaching redress. It is often seen at sea, that men (from unacquaintance with such agitations, or from brackish steams arising from the salt water) are heartily sick, and discover themselves to be so by apparently grievous symptoms; yet no man hardly there doth mind or pity them, because the malady is not supposed dangerous, and within a while will probably of itself pass over; or that however the remedy is not far off; the sight of land, a taste of the fresh air will relieve them: it is near our case: we passing over this troublesome sea of life; from unexperience, joined with the tenderness of our constitution, we cannot well endure the changes and crosses of fortune; to be tossed up and down; to suck in the sharp vapours of penury, disgrace, sickness, and the like, doth beget a qualm in our stomachs; make us nauseate all things, and appear sorely distempered; yet is not our condition so dismal as it seems; we may grow hardier, and wear out our sense of affliction; however, the land is not far off, and by disembarking hence we shall suddenly be discharged of all our molestations. It is a common solace of grief, approved by wise men, *si gravis, brevis est; si longus, levis;* if it be very grievous and acute, it cannot continue long, without intermission or respite; if it abide long, it is insupportable [a]; intolerable pain is like lightning, it destroys us, or is itself instantly destroyed. However, death at length (which never is far off) will free us; be we

[a] Θάρσει· πόνε γὰρ ἄκρον ἀκ ἔχει χρόνον. *Æschyl. apud Plutarch. de Aud. Poet.* sub finem.

Τὸ μὲν ἀφόρητον ἐξάγει· τὸ δὲ χρονίζον φορητόν. *Ant.* vii. § 33.

Summi doloris intentio invenit finem; nemo potest valde dolere et diu; sic nos amantissima nostri natura disposuit, ut dolorem aut tolerabilem, aut brevem faceret. *Sen.* Ep. 74.

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never so much tossed with storms of misfortune, that is a sure haven; be we persecuted with never so many enemies, that is a safe refuge; let what pains or diseases soever infest us, that is an assured anodynon, and infallible remedy for them all; however we be wearied with the labours of the day, the night will come and ease us; the grave will become a bed of rest unto us. [b] Shall I die? I shall then cease to be sick; I shall be exempted from disgrace; I shall be enlarged from prison; I shall be no more pinched with want; no more tormented with pain. Death is a winter, that as it withers the rose and lily, so it kills the nettle and thistle; as it stifles all worldly joy and pleasure, so it suppresses all care and grief; as it hushes the voice of mirth and melody, so it stills the clamours and the sighs of misery; as it defaces all the world's glory, so it covers all disgrace, wipes off all tears, silences all complaint, buries all disquiet and discontent. King Philip of Macedon once threatened the Spartans to vex them sorely, and bring them into great straits; but, answered they, *can he hinder us from dying*[c]? that indeed is a way of evading which no enemy can obstruct, no tyrant can debar men from; they who can deprive of life, and its conveniences, cannot take away death from them. There is a place, Job tells us, *where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest: where the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor: the small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.* It is therefore but holding out a while, and a deliverance from the worst this world can molest us with shall of its own accord arrive unto us; in the mean time it is better that we at present owe the benefit of our comfort to reason, than afterward to time; by rational consideration to work patience and contentment in ourselves; and to use the shortness of our life as an argument to sustain us in our affliction,

Job iii. 17.

Ὁ μὲλλων τῷ χρόνῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦτο τῷ λόγῳ χαρίσαι. *Plut. ad Apol.* p. 195.

[b] Dolore perculsi mortem imploramus, eamque unam, ut miseriarum malorumque terminum exoptamus. *Cic. Consolat.*

Moriar? hoc dicis; desinam ægrotare posse, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 24.

[c] Ἄδην ἔχων βοηθὸν, οὐ τρίμω σκιάς.

Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest; at nemo mortem. *Sen. Trag.*

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than to find the end thereof only a natural and necessary means of our rescue from it. The contemplation of this cannot fail to yield something of courage and solace to us in the greatest pressures; these transient and short-lived evils, if we consider them as so, cannot appear such horrid bugbears, as much to affright or dismay us; if we remember how short they are, we cannot esteem them so great, or so intolerable. There be, I must confess, divers more noble considerations, proper and available to cure discontent and impatience. The considering, that all these evils proceed from God's just will, and wise providence; unto which it is fit, and we upon all accounts are obliged readily to submit; that they do ordinarily come from God's goodness and gracious design towards us; that they are medicines (although ungrateful, yet wholesome) administered by the Divine Wisdom to prevent, remove, or abate our distempers of soul, (to allay the tumours of pride, to cool the fevers of intemperate desire, to rouse us from the lethargy of sloth, to stop the gangrene of bad conscience;) that they are fatherly corrections, intended to reclaim us from sin, and excite us to duty; that they serve as instruments or occasions to exercise, to try, to refine, our virtue; to beget in us the hope, to qualify us for the reception of better rewards; such discourses indeed are of a better nature, and have a more excellent kind of efficacy; yet no fit help, no good art, no just weapon is to be quite neglected in the combat against our spiritual foes. A pebble-stone hath been sometimes found more convenient than a sword or a spear to slay a giant. Baser remedies (by reason of the patient's constitution, or circumstances) do sometime produce good effect, when others in their own nature more rich and potent want efficacy. And surely frequent reflections upon our mortality, and living under the sense of our lives' frailty, cannot but conduce somewhat to the begetting in us an indifferency of mind toward all these temporal occurrents; to extenuate both the goods and the evils we here meet with; consequently therefore to compose and calm our passions about them.

Omnia brevia tolerabilia esse debent, etiamsi magna sint. *Cic. Læl. ad fin.*

3. But I proceed to another use of that consideration we

speak of emergent from the former, but so as to improve it to higher purposes. For since it is useful to the diminishing our admiration of these worldly things, to the withdrawing our affections from them, to the slackening our endeavours about them; it will follow that it must conduce also to beget an esteem, a desire, a prosecution of things conducing to our future welfare; both by removing the obstacles of doing so, and by engaging us to consider the importance of those things in comparison with these. By removing obstacles, I say; for while our hearts are possessed with regard and passion toward these present things, there can be no room left in them for respect and affection toward things future. It is in our soul as in the rest of nature; there can be no penetration of objects, as it were, in our hearts, nor any vacuity in them: our mind no more than our body can be in several places, or tend several ways, or abide in perfect rest; yet somewhere it will always be; somewhither it will always go; somewhat it will ever be doing. If we *have a treasure* here, (somewhat we greatly like and much confide in,) *our hearts will be here* with it; and if here, they cannot be otherwhere; they will be taken up; they will rest satisfied; they will not care to seek farther. If we affect worldly glory, and delight in the applause of men, we shall not be so careful to please God, and seek his favour. If we admire and repose confidence in riches, it will make us neglectful of God, and distrustful of his providence: if our mind thirsts after, and sucks in greedily sensual pleasures, we shall not relish spiritual delights, attending the practice of virtue and piety, or arising from good conscience: adhering to, attending upon masters of so different, so opposite a quality is inconsistent; they cannot abide peaceably together, they cannot both rule in our narrow breasts; we shall love and hold to the one, hate and despise the other. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;* the love of the world, as the present guest, so occupies and fills the room, that it will not admit, cannot hold the love of God. But when the heart is discharged and emptied of these things; when we begin to despise them as base and

Matt. vi. 21.

John v. 44. xii. 43.

Mat. vi. 24.

Rom. viii. 5.

1 John ii. 15.

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vain; to distaste them as insipid and unsavoury; then naturally will succeed a desire after other things promising a more solid content; and desire will breed endeavour; and endeavour (furthered by God's assistance always ready to back it) will yield such a glimpse and taste of those things, as will so comfort and satisfy our minds, that thereby they will be drawn and engaged into a more earnest prosecution of them. When, I say, driving on ambitious projects, heaping up wealth, providing for the flesh, (by our reflecting on the shortness and frailty of our life,) become so insipid to us, that we find little appetite to them, or relish in them; our restless minds will begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, desiring some satisfaction thence: discerning these secular and carnal fruitions to be mere husks, (the proper food of swine,) we shall bethink ourselves of that better nourishment (of rational or spiritual comfort) which our Father's house doth afford to his children and servants. Being somewhat disentangled from the care of our farms and our traffics; from yoking our oxen, and being married to our present delights; we may be at leisure, and in disposition to comply with divine invitations to entertainments spiritual. Experiencing that our trade about these petty commodities turns to small account, and that in the end we shall be nothing richer thereby; reason will induce us, with the merchant in the Gospel, *to sell all that we have* (to forego our present interests and designs) for the purchasing that *rich pearl* of God's kingdom, which will yield so exceeding profit; the gain of present comfort to our conscience, and eternal happiness to our souls. In fine, when we consider seriously, that *we have here no abiding city*, but are only *sojourners and pilgrims upon earth;* that all our care and pain here do regard only an uncertain and transitory state; and will therefore suddenly as to all fruit and benefit be lost unto us; this will suggest unto us, with the good patriarchs, κρείττονος ὀρέγεσθαι πατρίδος, *to long after a better country;* a more assured and lasting state of life; where we may enjoy some certain and durable repose; to tend homeward, in our desires and hopes, toward those eternal mansions of joy and rest prepared for God's

Luke xv. 16.

Mat. xxii. 5.

Matt. xiii. 46.

Heb. xiii. 14.

1 Pet. ii. 11.

Heb. xi. 16.

faithful servants in heaven. Thus will this consideration help toward the bringing us to enquire after and regard the things concerning our future state; and in the result will engage us to compare them with these present things, as to our concernment in them and the consequence of them to our advantage or damage, whence a right judgment and a congruous practice will naturally follow. There be four ways of comparing the things relating to this present life with those which respect our future state. comparing the goods of this with the goods of that; the evils of this with the evils of that; the goods of this with the evils of that; the evils of this with the goods of that. All these comparisons we may find often made in Scripture; in order to the informing our judgment about the respective value of both sorts; the present consideration intervening, as a standard to measure and try them by.

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First, then; comparing the present goods with those which concern our future state, since the transitoriness and uncertainty of temporal goods detract from their worth, and render them in great degree contemptible; but the durability and certainty of spiritual goods, doth increase their rate, and make them exceedingly valuable; it is evident hence, that spiritual goods are infinitely to be preferred in our opinion, to be more willingly embraced, to be more zealously pursued, than temporal goods; that, in case of competition, when both cannot be enjoyed, we are in reason obliged readily to part with all these, rather than to forfeit our title unto, or hazard our hope of those. Thus in the Scripture it is often discoursed: *The world*, saith St. John, *passeth away, and the desire thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.* The world, and all that is desirable therein, is transient; but obedience to God's commandments is of an everlasting consequence; whence he infers, that we should *not love the world;* that is, not entertain such an affection thereto, as may any way prejudice the love of God, or hinder the obedience springing thence, or suitable thereto. 1 John ii. 17.

All flesh is grass, saith St. Peter, *and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the* 1 Pet. i. 24.

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flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; all worldly glory is frail and fading, but the word of God is eternally firm and permanent; that is, the good things by God promised to them, who faithfully serve him, shall infallibly be conferred on them to their everlasting benefit; whence it follows, that, as he exhorts, we are bound to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and hope to the end; to proceed and persist constantly in faithful obedience to God. *Charge those,* saith St. Paul, *who are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future; that they may attain everlasting life.* Since, argues he, present riches are of uncertain and short continuance; but faith and obedience to God, exercised in our charity and mercy toward men, are a certain stock improvable to our eternal interest; therefore be not proud of, nor rely upon those, but regard especially, and employ yourselves upon these. Our Saviour himself doth often insist upon and inculcate this comparison: *Treasure not unto yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but treasure up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. Do not take care for your soul, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink; nor for your body, what ye shall put on; but seek first the kingdom of God. Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth to eternal life; sell your substance, and give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old; an indefectible treasure in the heavens.* Thus doth the holy Scripture, setting forth the uncertainty and transitoriness of the present, the certainty and permanency of future goods, declare the excellency of these above those; advising thereupon, with highest reason, that we willingly reject those (in real effect, if need be, however always in ready disposition of mind) in order to the procuring or securing of these. It also, for our example and encouragement,

1 Pet. i. 13.

1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

Matt. vi. 19, 20.

Matt. vi. 25.

John vi. 27.

Luke xiii. 33.

Θησαυρὸν ἀνέκλειπτον.

commends to us the wisdom and virtue of those persons, who have effectually practised this duty: of Abraham, our father, who, in expectation of that well-founded city, made and built by God, did readily desert his country and kindred, with all present accommodations of life: of Moses, who disregarded the splendours and delights of a great court; rejected the alliance of a great princess, and *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*, in respect to the μισθαποδοσία, that future distribution of reward; a share wherein shall assuredly fall to them, who above all other considerations regard the performance of their duty to God: of the Apostles, who *forsook all*, parents, brethren, lands, houses, trades, receipts of custom, to follow Christ; him at present poor, and naked of all secular honour, power, wealth, and delight; in hope only to receive from him divine benefits, and future preferments in his kingdom: of Mary, who neglecting present affairs, and seating herself at Jesus's feet, attending to his discipline, is commended for her wisdom, in minding the *only necessary thing;* in choosing *the better part, which could never be taken from her:* of St. Paul, who *accounted all his gains* (all his worldly interests and privileges) *to be damage*, to be *dung in respect to Christ, and the excellent knowledge of him*, with the benefits thence accruing to him. On the contrary there we have Esau condemned and stigmatized for a *profane* and a vain *person*, who (ἀντὶ μιᾶς βρώσεως) *for one little eating-bout*, one mess of pottage, (for a little present satisfaction of sense, or for the sustenance of this frail life,) did withgo his birthright, that emblem of spiritual blessings and privileges. We have again represented to us that unhappy young gentleman; who, though he had good qualities, rendering him amiable even to our Saviour, and had been trained up in the observance of God's commandments, yet not being content to part with his large possessions, in lieu of the treasure by Christ offered in heaven, was reputed deficient; could find no acceptance with God, nor admission into his kingdom; for a petty temporal commodity forfeiting an infinite eternal advantage. For, saith our Saviour, *He that loveth father or mo-*

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Heb. xi. 10.

Heb. xi. 23.

Matt. xix. 27. Luke xviii. 28.

Luke x. 39.

Phil. iii. 7, 8.

Heb. xii. 16.

Mark x. 17.

Matt. x. 37.

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ther above me; he that doth not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea his own life, for me and the Gospel, is not worthy of me, nor can be my disciple. He that in his esteem or affection doth prefer any temporal advantages before the benefits tendered by our Saviour, (yea doth not in comparison despise, renounce, and reject his dearest contents of life, and the very capacity of enjoying them, his life itself,) doth not deserve to be reckoned among the disciples of Christ; to be so much as a pretender to eternal joy, or a candidate of immortality. Our Saviour rejects all such unwise and perverse traders, who will not exchange brittle glass for solid gold; counterfeit glistering stones for genuine most precious jewels; a garland of fading flowers for an incorruptible crown of glory; a small temporary pension for a vastly rich freehold; *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.* Thus doth the holy Scripture teach us to compare these sorts of good things;

Luke xiv. 26. Mark x. 29.

1 Pet. i. 4.

And secondly, so also doth to it compare the evils of both states; for that seeing, as the soon ceasing of temporal mischiefs should (in reasonable proceeding) diminish the fear of them, and mitigate the grief for them; so the incessant continuance of spiritual evils doth, according to just estimation, render them hugely grievous and formidable; it is plain, that we should much more dislike, abominate, and shun spiritual evils, than temporal; that we should make no question rather to endure these paroxysms of momentary pain, than incur those chronical, and indeed incurable, maladies; that we should run willingly into these shallow plashes of present inconvenience, rather than plunge ourselves into those unfathomable depths of eternal misery. There is, I suppose, no man, who would not account it a very great calamity (such as hardly greater could befall him here) to have *his right eye plucked out*, and *his right hand cut off*, and *his foot* taken from him; to be deformed and maimed, so that he can do nothing, or stir any whither: yet our Lord represents these to us as inconsiderable evils, yea as things very eligible and advantageous in comparison of those mischiefs, which the vo-

Matt. v. 29. xviii. 8.

luntary not embracing them, in case we cannot otherwise than by so doing avoid sin, will bring on us: συμφέρει σοι, *it is*, saith he, *profitable for thee that one of thy members be lost, rather than that thy whole body be cast into hell:* καλόν σοι ἐστί, *it is good*, it is excellent for thee *to enter into life lame and maimed, and one-eyed, rather than having two hands and two feet and two eyes*, (in all integrity and beauty of this temporal, or corporal state,) *to be cast into eternal fire.* To be banished from one's native soil, secluded from all comforts of friendly acquaintance, divested irrecoverably of great estate and dignity; becoming a vagrant and a servant in vile employment, in a strange country, every man would be apt to deem a wretched condition: yet Moses, we see, freely chose it, rather than by enjoying unlawful pleasures at home, in Pharaoh's court, to incur God's displeasure and vengeance: συγκακουχεῖσθαι μᾶλλον ἑλόμενος, *choosing rather to undergo evil together with God's people, than to have* πρόσκαιρον ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, *a temporary fruition of sinful delight*, dangerous to the welfare of his soul. Death is commonly esteemed the most extreme and terrible of evils incident to man; yet our Saviour bids us not to regard or fear it, in comparison of that deadly ruin which we adventure on by offending God: *I say unto you, my friends*, saith he, (he intended it for the most friendly advice,) *be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have nothing farther to do: but I will shew you whom you shall fear; Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell*, to cast both body and soul into hell, and destroy them therein; *yea, I say unto you*, (so he inculcates and impresses it upon them,) *Fear him.*

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Heb. xi. 25.

Luke xii. 4. Matt. x. 28. Ἀποκτεῖναι δύνανται, βαλεῖν δὲ κ.

But thirdly, considering the good things of this life together with the evils of that which is to come; since enjoying these goods in comparison with enduring those evils, is but rejoicing for a moment in respect of mourning to eternity; if upon the seeming sweetness of these enjoyments to our carnal appetite be consequent a remediless distempering of our soul; so that what tastes like honey proves gall in the digestion, gripes our bowels, gnaws our heart, and stings our conscience for ever; if present mirth

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and jollity have a tendency to that dreadful weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth threatened in the Gospel; if, for the praise and favour of a few giddy men here, we venture eternal shame and confusion before God and angels and all good men hereafter; if, for attaining or preserving a small stock of uncertain riches in this world, we shall reduce ourselves into a state of most uncomfortable nakedness and penury in the other; it is clear as the sun that we are downright fools and madmen, if we do not upon these accounts rather willingly reject all these good things, than hazard incurring any of those evils; for, saith truth itself, *What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world* (καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν) *and be endamaged as to his soul*, or lose his soul as a mulct? It is a very disadvantageous bargain, for all the conveniences this world can afford to be deprived of the comforts of our immortal state. But,

Mark viii. 36. Luke ix. 25.

Lastly, comparing the evils of this life with the benefits of the future; since the worst tempests of this life will be soon blown over, the bitterest crosses must expire (if not before, however) with our breath; but the good things of the future state are immutable and perpetual; it is an evident consequence most reasonable, that we freely, if need be, undertake, and patiently endure these for the sake of those, that in the hope of that *incorruptible inheritance laid up for us in heaven*, we not only support and comfort ourselves, but even rejoice and exult in all the afflictions by God's wise and just dispensation imposed on us here; as they in St. Peter, wherein, saith he, *ye greatly rejoice, (or exult,) being for a little while as in heaviness through manifold afflictions or trials. Accounting it all joy*, saith St. James, *when ye fall into divers temptations*, (that is afflictions or trials,) *knowing that the trial of your faith perfecteth patience;* that is, seeing the sufferance of these present evils conduceth to the furtherance of your spiritual and eternal welfare. And, *We glory in tribulation*, saith St. Paul, rendering the same account, because it tended to their soul's advantage. St. Paul, than whom no man perhaps ever more deeply tasted of the cup of affliction, and that tempered with all the most bitter ingredients which

1 Pet. i. 4.

1 Pet. i. 6. Ἀγαλλιᾶσθε ὀλίγον ἄρτι. Πειρασμοῖς. Jam. i. 2.

Rom. v. 8.

this world can produce; whose life was spent in continual agitation and unsettledness, in all hardships of travel and labour and care, in extreme sufferance of all pains both of body and mind; in all imaginable dangers and difficulties and distresses, that nature exposes man unto, or human malice can bring upon him; in all wants of natural comfort, (food, sleep, shelter, liberty, health;) in all kinds of disgrace and contumely; as you may see in those large inventories of his sufferings, registered by himself, in the 6th and 11th chapters of his second Epistle to the Corinthians; yet all this, considering the good things he expected afterward to enjoy, he accounted very slight and tolerable: *For*, saith he, *our lightness of affliction, that is for a little while here, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle* (of this unsteady transitory abode) *is dissolved, we are to have a tabernacle from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I reckon*, saith he again, that is, having made a due comparison and computation, I find, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy* (that is, are not considerable, come under no rate or proportion) *in respect of the glory which shall be revealed* (or openly conferred) *upon us.* The like opinion had those faithful Christians, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of whom it is said, that *being exposed to public scorn as in a theatre, with reproaches and afflictions, they did with gladness accept the spoiling* (or rapine) *of their goods; knowing that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance.* But the principal example (most obliging our imitation) of this wise choice, is that of our Lord himself; who, in contemplation of the future great satisfaction and reward of patient submission to the divine will, did willingly undergo the greatest of temporal sorrows and ignominies; *who*, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, propounding his example to us, *for the joy that was set before him, endured*

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Ἐν ἀπαταῖς.

2 Cor. xi. 23. vi. 5.

2 Cor. iv. 17. v. 1. Τὸ γὰρ παρ-αυτίκα ἐλα-φρὸν τῆς θλίψεως.

Rom. viii. 18.

Heb. x. 34. Θεατριζό-μενοι. Ἁρπαγήν.

Heb. xii. 2.

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the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.

Thus immediately, or by an easy inference, doth the consideration of this life's shortness and uncertainty confer to that main part of wisdom, rightly to value the things about which we are conversant; disposing us consequently to moderate our affections, and rightly to guide our actions about them: fitting us therefore for the performance of those duties so often enjoined us; of not caring for, not trusting in, not minding (unduly that is, and immoderately) things below; of dying to this world, and taking up our cross, or contentedly suffering, in submission to God's will, all loss and inconvenience; as also to the placing our meditation and care, our love and desire, our hope and confidence, our joy and satisfaction, our most earnest pains and endeavours, upon things divine, spiritual, and eternal.

IV. I proceed to another general benefit of that general consideration; which is, that it may engage us to a good improvement of our time; the doing which is a very considerable piece of wisdom. For if time be, as Theophrastus called it truly, *a thing of most precious value*, (or expence,) as it were a great folly to lavish it away unprofitably; so to be frugal thereof, and careful to lay it out for the best advantage, especially every man having so little store thereof, must be a special point of prudence. *To be covetous of time* (Seneca tells us) *is a commendable avarice;* it being necessary for the accomplishment of any worthy enterprize; there being nothing excellent, that can soon or easily be effected. Surely he that hath much and great business to dispatch, and but a little time allowed for it, is concerned to husband it well; not to lose it wholly in idleness; not to trifle it away in unnecessary divertisements; not to put himself upon other impertinent affairs; above all, not to create obstacles to himself, by pursuing matters of a tendency quite contrary to the success of his main undertakings. It is our case; we are obliged here to negotiate in business of infinite price and

Πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα.

Nulla nisi temporis honesta est avaritia. *Sen.*

consequence to us; no less than the salvation of our souls, and eternal happiness: and we see, that our time to drive it on and bring it to a happy issue is very scant and short; short in itself, and very short in respect to the nature of those affairs; the great variety and the great difficulty of them. The great father of physicians did quicken the students of that faculty to diligence, by admonishing them (in the first place, setting it in the front of his famous aphorisms) that *life is short, and art is long.* And how much more so is the art of living well, (that most excellent and most necessary art: for indeed virtue is not a gift of nature, but a work of art; an effect of labour and study:) this, I say, most needful and useful art of living virtuously and piously; this art of spiritual physic, (of preserving and recovering our souls' health,) how much longer is it? how many rules are to be learnt? how many precepts to be observed in order thereto? We are bound to furnish our minds with needful knowledge of God's will and our duty; we are to bend our unwilling wills to a ready compliance with them; we are to adorn our souls with dispositions suitable to the future state, (such as may qualify us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed spirits above;) it is incumbent on us to mortify corrupt desires, to restrain inordinate passions, to subdue natural propensities, to extirpate vicious habits; in order to the effecting these things, to use all fit means; devotion toward God, study of his law, reflection upon our actions, with all such spiritual instruments; the performing which duties, as it doth require great care and pains, so it needs much time; all this is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; a few spare minutes will not suffice to accomplish it. Natural inclination, that wild beast within us, will not so presently be tamed, and made tractable by us. Ill habits cannot be removed without much exercise and attendance; as they were begot, so they must be destroyed, by a constant succession, and frequency of acts. Fleshly lust is not to be killed with a stab or two; it will fight stoutly, and rebel often, and hold out long, before with our utmost endeavour we can obtain an entire victory over it. No vir-

Non enim dat natura virtutem; ars est bonum fieri. *Sen. Ep.* 89.

Τί φθίσεις ἴθος, ἐναντίον ἴθος. *Epict.*

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tue is acquired in an instant, but by degrees, step by step; from the seeds of right instruction and good resolution it springs up, and grows forward by a continual progress of customary practice; it is a child of patience, a fruit of perseverance, that ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *enduring in doing well*, St. Paul speaks of, and consequently a work of time; for enduring implies a good space of time. Having therefore so much to do, and of so great concernment, and so little a portion of time for it, it behoves us to be careful in the improvement of what time is allowed us; to embrace all opportunities and advantages offered; to go the nearest way, to use the best compendiums in the transaction of our business; not to be slothful and negligent, but active and intent about it; (for as time is diminished, and in part lost by sloth or slackness; so it is enlarged, and, as it were, multiplied by industry; my day is two in respect of his, who doeth but half my work:) not, also, to consume our time in fruitless pastimes, and curious entertainments of fancy; being idly busy about impertinences and trifles; (we call it sport, but it is a serious damage to us;) not to immerse ourselves in multiplicities of needless care about secular matters, which may distract us, and bereave us of fit leisure for our great employment; that which our Saviour calls τυρβάζεσθαι περὶ πολλὰ, *to keep a great deal of do* and stir (to be jumbled about as it were, and confounded) *about many things;* and, περισπᾶσθαι περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν, *to be distracted* and perplexed *about much cumbersome service;* which St. Paul calls περιπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *to be implicated* and entangled, as in a net, *with the negociations of his present life;* so that we shall not be expedite, or free to bestir ourselves about our more weighty affairs. The spending much time about those things doth steal it from these; yea doth more than so, by discomposing our minds so that we cannot well employ what time remains upon our spiritual concernments. But especially we should not prostitute our time upon vicious projects and practices; doing which is not only a prodigality of the present time, but an abridgment of the future; it not only doth not promote or set forward our business,

Rom. ii. 7.

Luke x. 40.

1 Tim. ii. 4.

but brings it backward, and makes us more work than we had before; it is a going in a way directly contrary to our journey's end. The Scripture aptly resembles our life to a wayfaring, a condition of travel and pilgrimage: now he that hath a long journey to make, and but a little time of day to pass it in, must in reason strive to set out soon, and then to make good speed; must proceed on directly, making no stops or deflections, (not calling in at every sign that invites him, not standing to gaze at every object seeming new or strange to him; not staying to talk with every passenger that meets him; but rather avoiding all occasions of diversion and delay,) lest he be surprised by the night, be left to wander in the dark, be excluded finally from the place whither he tends: so must we, in our course toward heaven and happiness, take care that we set out soon, (procrastinating no time, but beginning instantly to insist in the ways of piety and virtue,) then proceed on speedily, and persist constantly; nowhere staying or loitering, shunning all impediments and avocations from our progress, lest we never arrive near, or come too late unto the gate of heaven. St. Peter tells us, that the end of all things doth approach, and thereupon advises us *to be sober, and to watch unto prayer;* for that the less our time is, the more intent and industrious it concerns us to be. And St. Paul enjoins us to *redeem the time, because the days are evil;* that is, since we can enjoy no true quiet or comfort here, we should improve our time to the best advantage for the future. He might have also adjoined, with the patriarch Jacob, the paucity of the days to their badness; because *the days of our life are few and evil,* let us redeem the time; *man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble:* so few indeed they are, that it is fit we should lose none of them, but use them all in preparation toward that great change we are to make; that fatal passage out of this strait time into that boundless eternity. So, it seems, we have Job's example of doing; *All the days,* says he, *of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.* I end this point with that so comprehensive warning of our Saviour: *Take heed to yourselves, lest*

1 Pet. iv. 7.

Eph. v. 15.

Gen. xlvii. 9.

Job xiv. 1.

Job xiv. 14.

Luke xxi. 34.

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at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to escape—and to stand before the Son of man.

V. I shall adjoin but one use more, to which this consideration may be subservient, which is, that it may help to beget and maintain in us (that which is the very heart and soul of all goodness) sincerity: sincerity in all kinds, in our thoughts, words, and actions. To keep us from harbouring in our breasts such thoughts, as we would be afraid or ashamed to own; from speaking otherwise than we mean, than we intend to do, than we are ready any where openly to avow; from endeavouring to seem what we are not; from being one thing in our expressions and conversations with men; another in our hearts, or in our closets: from acting with oblique respects to private interests or passions, to human favour or censure; (in matters, I mean, where duty doth intervene, and where pure conscience ought to guide and govern us;) from making professions and ostentations, (void of substance, of truth, of knowledge, of good purpose,) great semblances of peculiar sanctimony, integrity, scrupulosity, spirituality, refinedness, like those pharisees so often therefore taxed in the Gospel; as also from palliating, as those men did, designs of ambition, avarice, envy, animosity, revenge, perverse humour, with pretences of zeal and conscience. We should indeed strive to be good (and that in all real strictness, aiming at utmost perfection) in outward act and appearance, as well as in heart and reality, for the glory of God and example of men, (*providing things honest in the sight of all men;*) but we must not shine with a false lustre, nor care to seem better than we are, nor intend to serve ourselves in seeming to serve God; bartering spiritual commodities for our own glory or gain. For since the day approaches when *God will judge* (τὰ κρυπτὰ ἀνθρώπων) *the things men do so studiously conceal;* when *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil;* since *we must all*

Rom. xii. 17.

Rom. ii. 16. Eccl. xii. 14. 2 Cor. v. 10.

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appear (or rather be all made apparent, be manifested and discovered) *at the tribunal of Christ:* since *there is nothing covered, which shall not be revealed, nor hid, that shall not be known; so that whatever is spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the house-tops:* since at length, and that within a very short time, (no man knows how soon,) the whispers of every mouth (the closest murmurs of detraction, slander, and sycophantry) shall become audible to every ear; the abstrusest thoughts of all hearts (the closest malice and envy) shall be disclosed in the most public theatre before innumerable spectators; the truth of all pretences shall be thoroughly examined; the just merit of every person and every cause shall with a most exact scrutiny be scanned openly in the face of all the world; to what purpose can it be to juggle and baffle for a time; for a few days (perhaps for a few minutes) to abuse or to amuse those about us with crafty dissimulation or deceit? Is it worth the pains to devise plausible shifts, which shall instantly, we know, be detected and defeated; to bedaub foul designs with a fair varnish, which death will presently wipe off; to be dark and cloudy in our proceedings, whenas a clear day (that will certainly dispel all darkness and scatter all mists) is breaking in upon us; to make vizors for our faces, and cloaks for our actions, whenas we must very shortly be exposed, perfectly naked and undisguised, in our true colours, to the general view of angels and men? Heaven sees at present what we think and do, and our conscience cannot be wholly ignorant or insensible; nor can earth itself be long unacquainted therewith. Is it not much better, and more easy (since it requires no pains or study) to act ourselves, than to accommodate ourselves to other unbeseeming and undue parts; to be upright in our intentions, consistent in our discourses, plain in our dealings, following the single and uniform guidance of our reason and conscience, than to shuffle and shift, wandering after the various, uncertain, and inconstant opinions or humours of men? What matter is it what clothes we wear, what garb we appear in, during this posture of travel and sojourning here; what for

Οὐ γὰρ παρῆναι ἡμᾶς ἁπλῶς δεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνερωτηθῆναι. *Chrysost.* Luke xii. 2, 3.

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the present we go for; how men esteem us, what they think of our actions? St. Paul at least did not much stand upon it; for, *with me*, said he, *it is a very small thing* (ἐλάχιστον, the least thing that can come under consideration) *to be judged of you, or of human day*, (that is, of this present transitory, fallible, reversible judgment of men.) If we mean well and do righteously, our conscience will at present satisfy us, and the divine (unerring and impartial) sentence will hereafter acquit us; no unjust or uncharitable censure shall prejudice us: if we entertain base designs, and deal unrighteously, as our conscience will accuse and vex us here, so God will shortly condemn and punish us; neither shall the most favourable conceit of men stand us in stead. *Every man's work shall become manifest, for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire* (that is, a severe and strict inquiry) *shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.* I cannot insist more on this point; I shall only say, that, considering the brevity and uncertainty of our present state, the greatest simplicity may justly be deemed the truest wisdom; that who deceives others, doth cozen himself most; that the deepest policy, used to compass or to conceal bad designs, will in the end appear the most downright folly.

1 Cor. iv. 3.

1 Cor. iii. 13.

Τοῦτο ἔχει ἡ τελειότης τοῦ ἤθους τὸ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν ὡς τελευταίαν διεξέρχειν. *Anton.* ib. vii.

I might add to the precedent discourses, that Philosophy itself hath commended this consideration as a proper and powerful instrument of virtue, reckoning the practice thereof a main part of wisdom; the greatest proficient therein in common esteem, Socrates, having defined Philosophy, or the study of wisdom, to be nothing else but μελέτη θανάτου, *the study of death;* intimating also, (in Plato's Phædon,) that this study, the meditation of death, and preparation of his mind to leave this world, had been the constant and chief employment of his life: that likewise, according to experience, nothing more avails to render the minds of men sober and well composed, than such spectacles of mortality, as do impress this consideration upon them. For whom doth not the sight of a coffin, or of a grave gaping to receive a friend, perhaps, or an ancient acquaintance; however a man in nature and state altoge-

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ther like ourselves; of the mournful looks and habits, of all the sad pomps and solemnities attending man unto his long home, by minding him of his own frail condition, affect with some serious, some honest, some wise thoughts? And if we be reasonable men, we may every day supply the need of such occasions, by representing to ourselves the necessity of our soon returning to the dust; dressing in thought our own hearses, and celebrating our own funerals; by living under the continual apprehension and sense of our transitory and uncertain condition; dying daily, or becoming already dead unto this world. The doing which effectually being the gift of God, and an especial work of his grace, let us of him humbly implore it, saying after the holy Prophet, *Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Amen.

SERMON XLVIII.

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM cxix. 60.

I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

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THIS Psalm (no less excellent in virtue, than large in bulk) containeth manifold reflections upon the nature, the properties, the adjuncts and effects of God's law; many sprightly ejaculations about it, (conceived in different forms of speech; some in way of petition, some of thanksgiving, some of resolution, some of assertion or aphorism;) many useful directions, many zealous exhortations to the observance of it; the which are not ranged in any strict order, but (like a variety of fair flowers and wholesome herbs in a wide field) do with a grateful confusion lie dispersed, as they freely did spring up in the heart, or were suggested by the devout spirit of him who indited the Psalm; whence no coherence of sentences being designed, we may consider any one of them absolutely, or singly by itself.

Among them, that which I have picked out for the subject of my discourse implieth an excellent rule of practice, authorized by the Psalmist's example: it is propounded in way of devotion or immediate address to God; unto whose infallible knowledge his conscience maketh an appeal concerning his practice; not as boasting thereof, but as praising God for it, unto whose gracious instruction and succour he frequently doth ascribe all his performances: but the manner of propounding I shall not insist

upon; the rule itself is, that speedily, without any procrastination or delay, we should apply ourselves to the observance of God's commandments; the practice of which rule it shall be my endeavour to recommend and press. SERM. XLVIII.

It is a common practice of men, that are engaged in bad courses, which their own conscience discerneth and disapproveth, to adjourn the reformation of their lives to a farther time, so indulging themselves in the present commission of sin, that yet they would seem to purpose and promise themselves hereafter to repent and take up[a]: few resolve to persist finally in an evil way, or despair of being one day reclaimed; but immediately and effectually to set upon it, many deem unseasonable or needless; it will, they presume, be soon enough to begin to-morrow, or next day, a month or a year hence, when they shall find more commodious opportunity, or shall prove better disposed thereto: in the mean time with Solomon's sluggard, *Yet*, say they, *a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands:* let us but neglect this duty, let us but satisfy this appetite, let us but enjoy this bout of pleasure; hereafter, God willing, we mean to be more careful, we hope that we shall become more sober: so like bad debtors, when our conscience dunneth us, we always mean, we always promise to pay; if she will stay awhile, she shall, we tell her, be satisfied; or like vain spendthrifts, we see our estate fly, yet presume that it will hold out, and at length we shall reserve enough for our use. Εἰς αὔριον τὰ σπουδαῖα, *Let serious business stay till the morrow*, was a saying that cost dear to him who said it; yet we in our greatest concerns follow him.

Victuros agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam. *Manil.* 4.

Prov. vi. 10.

Plut. in Pelop.

But how fallacious, how dangerous, and how mischievous this manner of proceeding is; how much better and more advisable it is, after the example propounded in our text, speedily to betake ourselves unto the discharge of our debt and duty to God, the following considerations will plainly declare.

Non est, crede mihi, sapientis dicere, vivam. *Mart.* i. 16.

[a] Recognosce singulos, considera universos, nullius non vita spectat in crastinum; non enim vivunt, sed victuri sunt. *Sen. Ep.* 45.

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1. We may consider, that the observance of God's commandments (an observance of them proceeding from an habitual disposition of mind, in a constant tenor of practice) is our indispensable duty, our main concernment, our only way to happiness; the necessary condition of our attaining salvation; that alone, which can procure God's love and favour toward us; that unto which all real blessings here, and all bliss hereafter, are inseparably annexed: *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man;* (the whole duty, the whole design, the whole perfection, the sum of our wisdom, and our happiness.) *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: The righteous Lord loveth righeousness; his countenance doth behold the upright: God will render to every man according to his works:* these are oracles indubitably clear, and infallibly certain; these are immovable terms of justice between God and man, which never will, never can be relaxed; being grounded on the immutable nature of God, and eternal reason of things: if God had not decreed, if he had not said these things, they would yet assuredly be true: for it is a foul contradiction to reason, that a man ever should please God without obeying him; it is a gross absurdity in nature, that a man should be happy without being good; wherefore all the wit in the world cannot devise a way, all the authority upon earth (yea, I dare say, even in heaven itself,) cannot establish a condition, beside faithful observance of God's law, that can save, or make us happy: from it there can be no valid dispensation, without it there can be no effectual absolution, for it there can be no acceptable commutation; nor, in defect thereof, will any faith, any profession, any trick or pretence whatever, avail or signify any thing: whatever expedient to supply its room superstition, mistake, craft, or presumption may recommend, we shall, relying thereon, be certainly deluded. If, therefore, we mean to be saved, (and are we so wild as not to mean it?) if we do not renounce felicity, (and do we not then renounce our wits?) to become virtuous, to proceed in a course of obedience, is a work that necessarily must be performed: and why

Eccl. xii. 13.

Matt. xix. 27.
Psal. xi. 7.
Prov. xv. 9.
Rom. ii. 6.

Matt. v. 18.
Luke xvi. 17.
Psal. cxix. 15.

then should we not instantly undertake it? wherefore do we demur or stick at it? how can we at all rest quiet, while an affair of so vast importance lieth upon our hands, or until our mind be freed of all uncertainty and suspense about it? Were a probable way suggested to us of acquiring great wealth, honour, or pleasure, should we not quickly run about it? could we contentedly sleep, till we had brought the business to a sure or hopeful issue? and why with less expedition or urgency should we pursue the certain means of our present security and comfort, of our final salvation and happiness? In doing so, are we not strangely inconsistent with ourselves?

Again, disobedience is the certain road to perdition; that which involveth us in guilt and condemnation, that which provoketh God's wrath and hatred against us, that which assuredly will throw us into a state of eternal sorrow and wretchedness: *The foolish shall not stand in God's sight; he hateth all the workers of iniquity: If ye do not repent, ye shall perish: The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God: The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God: The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment:* these are denunciations no less sure than severe, from that mouth which is never opened in vain; from the execution whereof there can be no shelter or refuge. And what wise man, what man in his right senses, would for one minute stand obnoxious to them? Who, that anywise tendereth his own welfare, would move one step forward in so perilous and destructive a course? the farther in which he proceedeth, the more he discosteth from happiness, the nearer he approacheth to ruin.

Psal. v. 5. Luke xiii. 3. Psal. ix. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Matt. xxv. 46. vii. 21.

In other cases common sense prompteth men to proceed otherwise; for who, having rendered one his enemy, that far overmatcheth him, and at whose mercy he standeth, will not instantly sue to be reconciled? Who, being seized by a pernicious disease, will not haste to seek a cure? Who, being fallen into the jaws of a terrible danger, will not nimbly leap out thence? And such plainly is our case: while we persist in sin, we live in enmity and defiance with

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the Almighty, who can at his pleasure crush us; we lie under a fatal plague, which, if we do not seasonably repent, will certainly destroy us; we incur the most dreadful of all hazards, abiding in the confines of death and destruction; God frowning at us, guilt holding us, hell gaping for us: every sinner is, according to the Wise Man's expression, *as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.* And he that is in such a case, is he not mad or senseless, if he will not forthwith labour to swim out thence, or make all speed to get down into a safer place? Can any man with comfort lodge in a condition so dismally ticklish?

Prov. xxiii. 34.

2. We may consider, that, in order to our final welfare, we have much work to dispatch, the which requireth as earnest care and painful industry, so a competent long time; which, if we do not presently fall on, may be wanting, and thence our work be left undone, or imperfect. To conquer and correct bad inclinations, to render our sensual appetites obsequious to reason, to compose our passions into a right and steady order, to cleanse our souls from vanity, from perverseness, from sloth, from all vicious distempers, and in their room to implant firm habits of virtue; to get a clear knowledge of our duty, with a ready disposition to perform it; in fine, to season our minds with holy affections, qualifying us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed spirits above; these are things that must be done, but cannot be done in a trice; it is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; but ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *a patient continuance in well doing*, is needful to achieve it; for it no time can be redundant; the longest life can hardly be sufficient: *Art is long, and life is short*, may be an aphorism in divinity as well as in physic; the art of living well, of preserving our soul's health, and curing its distempers, requireth no less time to compass it, than any other art or science.

Rom. ii. 7.

Οὐ καθεύδουσιν ἡμῖν χορηγεῖ βοήθειαν ὁ Θεὸς, ἀλλὰ πονουμένοις. *Chrys. ad Eph. λογ. κά.*

Virtue is not a mushroom, that springeth up of itself in one night, when we are asleep, or regard it not; but a delicate plant, that groweth slowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much

time to mature it, in our untoward soil, in this world's unkindly weather: happiness is a thing too precious to be purchased at an easy rate; heaven is too high to be come at without much climbing; the crown of bliss is a prize too noble to be won without a long and a tough conflict. Neither is vice a spirit, that will be conjured down by a charm, or with a presto driven away; it is not an adversary, that can be knocked down at a blow, or dispatched with a stab. Whoever shall pretend that at any time, easily, with a celerity, by a kind of legerdemain, or by any mysterious knack, a man may be settled in virtue, or converted from vice, common experience abundantly will confute him; which sheweth, that a habit otherwise (setting miracles aside) cannot be produced or destroyed, than by a constant exercise of acts suitable or opposite thereto; and that such acts cannot be exercised without voiding all impediments, and framing all principles of action. (such as temper of body, judgment of mind, influence of custom,) to a compliance; that who by temper is peevish or choleric, cannot, without mastering that temper, become patient or meek; that who from vain opinions, is proud, cannot, without considering away those opinions, prove humble; that who by custom is grown intemperate, cannot, without weaning himself from that custom, come to be sober; that who, from the concurrence of a sorry nature, fond conceits, mean breeding, and scurvy usage, is covetous, cannot, without draining all those sources of his fault, be turned into liberal. The change of our mind is one of the greatest alterations in nature, which cannot be compassed in any way, or within any time we please; but it must proceed on leisurely and regularly, in such order, by such steps, as the nature of things doth permit; it must be wrought by a resolute and laborious perseverance; by a watchful application of mind, in voiding prejudices, in waiting for advantages, in attending to all we do; by forcibly wresting our nature from its bent, and swimming against the current of impetuous desires; by a patient disentangling ourselves from practices most agreeable and familiar to us; by a wary fencing with temptations, by

O quam istud parum putant, quibus tam facile videtur! *Quint.* xii. 1.

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long struggling with manifold oppositions and difficulties; whence the holy Scripture termeth our practice a warfare, wherein we are to fight many a bloody battle with most redoubtable foes; a combat, which must be managed with our best skill and utmost might; a race, which we must pass through with incessant activity and swiftness.

If therefore we mean to be good or to be happy, it behoveth us to lose no time; to be presently up at our great task; to snatch all occasions, to embrace all means incident of reforming our hearts and lives. As those, who have a long journey to go, do take care to set out early, and in their way make good speed, lest the night overtake them before they reach their home[b]; so it being a great way from hence to heaven, seeing we must pass over so many obstacles, through so many paths of duty, before we arrive thither, it is expedient to set forward as soon as can be, and to proceed with all expedition; the longer we stay, the more time we shall need, and the less we shall have.

3. We may consider, that no future time which we can fix upon will be more convenient than the present is for our reformation. Let us pitch on what time we please, we shall be as unwilling and unfit to begin as we are now; we shall find in ourselves the same indispositions, the same averseness, or the same listlessness toward it, as now: there will occur the like hardships to deter us, and the like pleasures to allure us from our duty; objects will then be as present, and will strike as smartly upon our senses; the case will appear just the same, and the same pretences for delay will obtrude themselves; so that we shall be as apt then as now to prorogue the business. We shall say then, to-morrow I will mend; and when that morrow cometh, it will be still to-morrow, and so the morrow will prove endless[c]. If, like the simple rustic, (who staid by the

[b] Ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε νῦν ἴομεν, δὴ γὰρ μέμβλωκε μάλιστα
Ἦμαρ, ἀτὰρ τάχα τοι ποτὶ ἕσπερα ῥίγιον ἔσται. *Hom. Od.* P.

[c] Cras hoc fiet; idem cras fiet, &c. *Pers. Sat.* v.
Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.
Ovid. de Rom. i. *Epict.* iv. 12.

river-side waiting till it had done running, so that he might pass dry foot over the channel,) we do conceit, that the sources of sin (bad inclinations within, and strong temptations abroad) will of themselves be spent, or fail, we shall find ourselves deluded [d]. If ever we come to take up, we must have a beginning with some difficulty and trouble; we must courageously break through the present with all its enchantments; we must undauntedly plunge into the cold stream; we must rouse ourselves from our bed of sloth; we must shake off that brutish improvidence, which detaineth us; and why should we not assay it now? There is the same reason now that ever we can have; yea, far more reason now; for if that we now begin, hereafter at any determinate time, some of the work will be done, what remaineth will be shorter and easier to us [e]. Nay, farther, SERM. XLVIII.

4. We may consider, that the more we defer, the more difficult and painful our work must needs prove; every day will both enlarge our task and diminish our ability to perform it [f]. Sin is never at a stay; if we do not retreat from it, we shall advance in it; and the farther on we go, the more we have to come back; every step we take forward (even before we can return hither, into the state wherein we are at present) must be repeated; all the web we spin must be unravelled; we must vomit up all we take in: which to do we shall find very tedious and grievous.

Vice, as it groweth in age, so it improveth in stature and strength; from a puny child it soon waxeth a lusty stripling, then riseth to be a sturdy man, and after a while becometh a massy giant, whom we shall scarce dare to encounter, whom we shall be very hardly able to vanquish; espe-

d ——qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum. *Hor. Ep* i. 2.

e Εἰ μὲν λυσιτελὴς ἡ ὑπέρθεσις ἐστιν, ἡ παντελὴς ἀπόστασις αὐτῆς ἐστι λυσιτελέστερα. *Epict.* iv. 12.
For the same reason we put it off, we should put it away. If it be good at all, it is good at present.

f Παρὰ τὸ σήμερον ἁμαρτηθὲν εἰς τἄλλα χεῖρον ἀνάγκη σοι τὰ πράγματα ἔχειν. *Epict.* iv. 12.

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cially seeing that as it groweth taller and stouter, so we shall dwindle and prove more impotent; for it feedeth upon our vitals, and thriveth by our decay; it waxeth mighty by stripping us of our best forces, by enfeebling our reason, by perverting our will, by corrupting our temper, by debasing our courage, by seducing all our appetites and passions to a treacherous compliance with itself: every day our mind groweth more blind, our will more resty, our spirit more faint, our appetites more fierce, our passions more headstrong and untameable[g]; the power and empire of sin do strangely by degrees encroach, and continually get ground upon us, till it hath quite subdued and enthralled us. First we learn to bear it; then we come to like it; by and by we contract a friendship with it; then we dote upon it; at last we become enslaved to it in a bondage, which we shall hardly be able, or willing, to shake off; when not only our necks are fitted to the yoke, our hands are manacled, and our feet shackled thereby; but our heads and hearts do conspire in a base submission thereto; when vice hath made such impression on us, when this pernicious weed hath taken so deep root in our mind, will, and affections, it will demand an extremely toilsome labour to extirpate it.

Indeed, by continuance in sin, the chief means (afforded by nature, or by grace) of restraining or reducing us from it, are either cut off, or enervated and rendered ineffectual.

Natural modesty, while it lasteth, is a curb from doing ill; men in their first deflections from virtue are bashful and shy[h]; out of regard to other men's opinion, and tenderness of their own honour, they are afraid or ashamed to transgress plain rules of duty: but in process, this disposition weareth out; by little and little they arrive to

g Falsis opinionibus tanto quisque inseritur, quanto magis in eis familiarisusque volutatur. *Aug. Ep.* 117.

h Μέγιστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν βοήθημα ἡ αἰδώς. *Greg. Naz. Or.* 26.

——— nam quis
Peccandi finem posuit sibi, quando recepit
Ejectum semel attrita de fronte ruborem. *Juv. Sat.* 18.

that character of the degenerate Jews, whom the Prophets call *impudent children*, having *a brow of brass*, and *faces harder than a rock*; so that they commit sin with open face, and in broad day, without any mask, without a blush; they despise their own reputation, and defy all censure of others; they outface and outbrave the world, till at length, with prodigious insolence, they come to boast of wickedness, and *glory in their shame*, as an instance of high courage and special gallantry. Ezek. ii. 4. iii. 7 Isa. xlviii. 4. Jer. v. 3. Prov. xxi. 29. Phil. iii. 19.

Conscience is a check to beginners in sin, reclaiming them from it, and rating them for it: but this in long standers becometh useless, either failing to discharge its office, or assaying it to no purpose; having often been slighted, it will be weary of chiding; or, if it be not wholly dumb, we shall be deaf to its reproof[i]: as those, who live by cataracts or downfalls of water, are, by continual noise, so deafened, as not to hear or mind it; so shall we in time grow senseless, not regarding the loudest peals and rattlings of our conscience.

The heart of a raw novice in impiety is somewhat tender and soft, so that remorse can pierce and sting it; his neck is yielding and sensible, so that the yoke of sin doth gall it: but in stout proficients the heart becometh hard and stony, the neck stiff and brawny; (*an iron sinew*, as the Prophet termeth it;) so that they do not feel or resent any thing; but are like those, of whom St. Paul speaketh, οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες, who *being past feeling*, all sorrow or smart, *have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* (Ezek. ii. 4. iii. 7. Neh. ix. 29. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Dan v. 20.) Isa. xlviii. 4. Quo quis pejus se habet, minus sentit. *Sen. Ep.* 53. Eph. iv. 19.

When first we nibble at the bait, or enter into bad courses, our reason doth contest and remonstrate against it, faithfully representing to us the folly, the ugliness, the baseness, the manifold ill consequences of sinning; but that, by continuance, is muffled, so as not to discern, or muzzled, so as not to declare; yea, often is so debauched as to excuse, to avow, and maintain, yea, to applaud and extol our miscarriages.

[i] Ψυχὴ ἅπαξ ἁμαρτίας γευσαμένη καὶ ἀναλγήτως διατεθεῖσα πολλὴν παρέχει τῷ νοσήματι τὴν προσθήκην, &c. *Chrys. Tom. Orat.* 64.

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For a time a man retaineth some courage, and a hope that he may repent; but progress in sin dispiriteth and casteth into despair, whether God be placable, whether himself be corrigible: an apprehension concerning the length of the way, or the difficulty of the work, discourageth; and despondency rendereth him heartless and careless to attempt it. There is no man that hath heard of God, who hath not at first some dread of offending him, and some dissatisfaction in transgressing his will; it appearing to his mind, not yet utterly blinded and depraved, a desperate thing to brave his irresistible power, an absurd thing to thwart his infallible wisdom, a detestable thing to abuse his immense goodness: but obstinacy in sin doth quash this conscientious awe; so that at length *God is not in all his thoughts, the fear of God is not before his eyes;* the wrath of the Almighty seemeth a bugbear, the fiercest menaces of religion sound but as rattles to him.

Psal. x. 4. xxxvi. 1.

As for the gentle whispers and touches of divine grace, the monitory dispensations of Providence, the good advices and wholesome reproofs of friends, with the like means of reclaiming sinners; these to persons *settled on their lees;* or fixed in bad custom, are but as gusts of wind brushing an old oak, or as waves dashing on a rock, without at all shaking or stirring it.

Jer. xlviii. 11. Zeph. i. 12.

Now when any person is come to this pass, it must be hugely difficult to reduce him; to retrieve a deflowered modesty, to quicken a jaded conscience, to supple a callous heart, to resettle a baffled reason, to rear a dejected courage, to recover a soul miserably benumbed and broken, to its former vigour and integrity, can be no easy matter.

The diseases of our soul, no less than those of our body, when once they are inveterate, they are become near incurable; the longer we forbear to apply due remedy, the more hard their cure will prove: if we let them proceed far, we must, ere we can be rid of them, undergo a course of physic very tedious and offensive to us; many a rough purge, many a sore phlebotomy,

many an irksome sweat we must endure [k]. Yea, farther,

5. We may consider, that by delaying to amend, to do it may become quite impossible; it may be so in the nature of the thing, it may be so by the will of God: the thing may become naturally impossible; for vice by custom may pass into nature, and prove so congenial, as if it were born with us; so that we shall propend to it, as a stone falleth down, or as a spark flieth upward: by soaking in voluptuousness, we may be so transformed into brutes, by steeping in malice so converted into fiends, that we necessarily shall act like creatures of that kind, into which we are degenerated; and then nowise, without a downright miracle, are we capable of being reformed [l]. *How long*, saith Solomon, *wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* We may be so often called on; and it is not easy to awaken us, when we are got into a spiritual slumber; but when we are *dead in trespasses and sins*, so that all breath of holy affection is stopped, and no spiritual pulse from our heart doth appear; that all sense of duty is lost, all appetite to good doth fail, no strength or activity to move in a good course doth exert itself, that our good complexion is dissolved, and all our finer spirits are dissipated, that our mind is quite crazed, and all its powers are shattered or spoiled; when thus, I say, we are spiritually dead, how can we raise ourselves, what beneath omnipotency can effect it? As a stick, when once it is dry and stiff, you may break it, but you can never bend it into a straighter posture; so doth the man become incorrigible, who is settled and stiffened in vice. The stain of habitual sin may sink in so deep, and so thoroughly tincture all our soul, that we may be like those people of whom the

Prov. vi. 9.

Eph. ii. 1. Apoc. iii. 1. 1 Tim. v. 6.

Frangas citius quam corrigas quæ in pravum induruerunt. *Quintil.* i. 3.

[k] ——frustra medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras. *Ovid.*

Ῥᾷον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μὴ ἐνδῦναι κακίαν, καὶ πρσσιοῦσαν διαφυγεῖν, ἢ προδαινοῦσαν ἀνακόψαι. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 26.

[l] Ἐπαδὰν εἰς φρενίτιν ἐκπεσόντες λακτίζωσι καὶ δάκνωσι τοὺς βουλομένους ἀπαλλάξαι τῆς ἀῤῥωστίας αὐτοὺς, τότε νοσοῦσιν ἀνίατα. *Chrys. in Babyl. Orat.* 2.

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Prophet saith, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Such an impossibility may arise from nature; one greater and more insuperable may come from God.

Jer. xiii. 23.

To an effectual repentance, the succour of divine grace is necessary; but that is arbitrarily dispensed; *the Spirit bloweth where it listeth;* yet it listeth wisely, with regard both to the past behaviour and present capacities of men; so that to such who have abused it, and to such who will not treat it well, it shall not be imparted. And can we be well assured, can we reasonably hope, that after we, by our presumptuous delays, have put off God, and dallied with his grace; after that he long in vain *hath waited to be gracious;* after that he hath endured so many neglects, and so many repulses from us; after that we frequently have slighted his open invitations, and smothered his kindly motions in us; in short, after we so unworthily have misused his goodness and patience, that he farther will vouchsafe his grace to us; when we have forfeited it, when we have rejected it, when we have spurned and driven it away, can we hope to recover it?

John iii. 8.

Τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας. Heb. x. 29.

Ἀδύνατον. Heb. vi. 4.

There is a time, a season, a day, allotted to us; *our day*, it is termed, *a day of salvation, the season of our visitation, an acceptable time;* wherein God freely doth exhibit grace, and presenteth his mercy to us: if we let this day slip, *the night cometh, when no man can work;* when *the things belonging to our peace will be hidden from our eyes;* when (as the Prophet expresseth it) we shall *grope for the wall like the blind, and stumble at noon-day as in the night, and be in desolate places as dead men:* after that day is spent, and that comfortable light is set, a dismal night of darkness, of cold, of disconsolateness, will succeed; when God being *weary of bearing* with men, doth utterly desert them, and *delivereth them over to a reprobate mind;* when substracting his gracious direction and assistance, *he giveth them over to their own heart's lusts, and to walk in their own counsels;* when they are brought to complain with those in the Prophet, *O Lord, why hast*

Luke xix. 42, 44. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Heb. iii. 13. John ix. 4.

Luke xix. 42.

Isa. lix. 10.

Jer. xv. 6. Mal. ii. 17. Isa. i. 14. vii. 13. Rom. i. 24. xxvi. 28. Psal. lxxxi. 12. Isa. lxiii. 17.

thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? when, like Pharaoh, they survive only as objects of God's justice, or occasions to glorify his power; when, like Esau, they cannot find a place of repentance, *although they seek it carefully with tears;* when, as to the foolish loitering virgins, *the door* of mercy *is shut upon them;* when the *Master of the house doth rise and shut the door*, &c. when that menace of divine wisdom cometh to be executed; *They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.* And if, neglecting our season and present means, we once fall into this state, then is our case most deplorable; we are dead men irreversibly doomed, and only for a few moments reprieved from the stroke of final vengeance; *we are vessels of wrath fitted* (or made up) *for destruction;* by a fatal blindness and obduration sealed up to ruin; we are like the *terra damnata, that earth* (in the Apostle) *which drinking up the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bearing thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing*, and *whose end is to be burned.* Wherefore, according to the advice of the Prophet, *Seek ye the Lord when he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*

Rom. ix. 17. Heb. xii. 17. Matt. xxv. 10. Luke xiii. 25. Prov. i. 28, 29. Rom. ix. 22. Κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν. Heb. vi. 7, 8. Isa. lv. 6.

It is true, that God is ever ready, upon our true conversion, to receive us into favour; that his arms are always open to embrace a sincere penitent; that he hath declared, *whenever a wicked man turneth from his wickedness, and doeth that which is right, he shall save his soul alive;* that if *we do wash ourselves, make us clean, put away the evil of our doings, and cease to do evil*, then, *although our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool;* that if *we rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, he is gracious and merciful, and will repent of the evil;* that *God is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon him;* that whenever a prodigal son, with humble confession and hearty contrition for his sin, doth *arise and go to his father,* he will embrace him tenderly, and

Ezek. xviii. 27. Isa. i. 16, 18. Joel ii. 13. Ps. lxxxvi. 5. Luke xv. 18.

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entertain him kindly; that even a profane apostate, and a bloody oppressor, (as Manasses,) a lewd strumpet, (as Magdalene,) a notable thief, (as he upon the cross,) a timorous renouncer, (as St. Peter,) a furious persecutor, (as St. Paul,) a stupid idolater, (as all the Heathen world, when the Gospel came to them, was,) the most heinous sinner that ever hath been, or can be imagined to be, if he be disposed to repent, is capable of mercy: those declarations and promises are infallibly true; those instances peremptorily do evince, that repentance is never superannuated; that if we can turn at all, we shall not turn too late; that *pœnitentia nunquam sera, modo seria*, is an irrefragable rule. Yet nevertheless delay is very unsafe; for what assurance can we have, that God hereafter will enable us to perform those conditions of bewailing our sins, and forsaking them? Have we not cause rather to fear that he will chastise our presumption by withholding his grace? For although God faileth not to yield competent aids to persons who have not *despised his goodness and long suffering, that leadeth them to repentance;* yet he that wilfully or wantonly loitereth away the time, and squandereth the means allowed him; who refuseth to come when God calleth, yea wooeth and courteth him to repentance, how can he pretend to find such favour?

Vid. Chrys. ad Theod. ii. Judas (saith he there) was capable of pardon.

Rom. ii. 4.

We might add, that supposing God in superabundance of mercy might be presumed never to withhold his grace; yet seeing his grace doth not work by irresistible compulsion; seeing the worse qualified we are, the more apt we shall be to cross and defeat its operation; seeing that we cannot hope that hereafter we shall be more fit than now to comply with it; yea seeing we may be sure, that, after our hearts are hardened by perseverance in sin, we shall be more indisposed thereto; we by delay of repentance do not only venture the forfeiture of divine grace, but the danger of abusing it, which heinously will aggravate our guilt, and hugely augment our punishment.

We should do well, therefore, most seriously to regard the Apostle's admonition; *Exhort one another to-day,*

Heb. iii. 13.

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while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Now that we find ourselves invited to repent; now that we apprehend so much reason for it; now that we feel our hearts somewhat inclined thereto; now that we have time in our hands, and are not barred from hopes of mercy: now that it is not extremely difficult, or not absolutely impossible, let us in God's name lay hold on the occasion, let us speedily and earnestly set upon the work. Farther yet,

6. We should consider, that we are mortal and frail, and thence any designs of future reformation may be clipt off, or intercepted by death; which is always creeping toward us, and may, for all we can tell, be very near at hand. You say you will repent to-morrow: but are you sure you shall have a morrow to repent in[m]? Have you an hour in your hand, or one minute at your disposal? Have you a lease to shew for any term of life? Can you claim or reckon upon the least portion of time without his leave, who bestoweth life, and dealeth out time, and ordereth all things as he pleaseth? Can you anywise descry the just *measure of your days*, or *the bounds of your appointed time*, without a special revelation from him, *in whose hands is your breath*; and *with whom* alone *the number of your months is* registered? *Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*, saith the Wise Man; boast not of it, that is, do not pretend it to be at thy disposal, presume not upon any thing that may befal therein; for whilst thou presumest thereon, may it not be said unto thee, as to the rich projector in the Gospel, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee?* Doth not, secluding hidden decrees, every man's life hang upon a thread very slender and frail? Is it not subject to many diseases lurking within, and to a thousand accidents flying about us? How many, that might have promised themselves as fair scope as we can, have been unexpectedly snapt away?

Job xii. 10. xiv. 5. vii. 1. Ps. xxxix. 4. xc. 12. Dan. v. 25. Prov. xxvii. 1. Οὐκ οἶδας τι τέξεται ἡ ἐπιοῦσα· μὴ ὑπαγγέλλου τὰ μὴ σά. *Bas. M. ad Bapt.* Luke xii. 20.

[m] Qui pœnitenti veniam spospondit, peccanti crastinum diem non promisit. *Greg. in Evang. Hom.* ix.

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How many have been cropt in the flower of their age, and vigour of their strength? Doth not every day present experiments of sudden death? Do we not continually see that observation of the Preacher verified, *Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it cometh suddenly upon them?* Old men are ready to drop of themselves, and young men are easily brushed or shaken down [n]; the former visibly stand upon the brink of eternity, the latter walk upon a bottomless quag, into which, unawares, they may slump; who then can anywise be secure? We are all, therefore, highly concerned to use our life, while we have it; to catch the first opportunity, lest all opportunity forsake us; to cut off our sinning, lest ourselves be cut off before it; and that the rather, because by lavishing, or misemploying our present time, we may lose the future, provoking God to bereave us of it: for as prolongation of time is a reward of piety; as to observance of the commandments it is promised, *Length of days, and long life, and peace, shall be added unto thee;* so being immaturely snatched hence is the punishment awarded to impious practice: so it is threatened, that *evil men shall be cut off;* that *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;* that *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his wickedness:* the very being unmindful of their duty is the cause why men are thus surprised; for, *If,* saith God, *thou dost not watch, I shall come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know when I come upon thee.* And, *If,* saith our Lord, *that servant doth say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming,* &c. *the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him,* &c.

Eccles. ix. 12.

Prov. iii. 2.

Ps. xxxvii. 9.

Psal. lv. 23.

Psal. lxviii. 21.

Rev. iii. 3. xvi. 15.

Luke xii. 45, 46.

If then it be certain, that we must render a strict account of all our doings here; if, by reason of our frail

[n] Τί γὰρ οἶδας, ἄνθρωπε ἁμαρτήσας, εἰ ἡμέρας ζήσεις ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ, ἵνα καὶ μετανοήσῃς, &c.

Ὅτι ἄδηλος ἡ ἔξοδός σε ἐκ τοῦ βίου ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ τελευτήσαντι μετάνοια οὐκ ἔσται, &c. *Const. Ap.* ii. 12.

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nature and slippery state, it be uncertain when we shall be summoned thereto; if our negligence may abridge and accelerate the term; is it not very reasonable to observe those advices of our Lord: *Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like men that wait for your Lord:* and to take the counsel of the Wise Man, *Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day; for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance.*

Matt. xxv. 13. xxiv. 42. Mark xiii. 33. Luke xii. 15, 35, 36. Ecclus. v. 7.

These considerations plainly do shew how very foolish, how extremely dangerous and destructive the procrastinating our reformation of life is: there are some others of good moment, which we shall reserve.

SERMON XLIX.

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM cxix. 60.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

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I PROCEED to the considerations which yet remain to be spoken to.

1. We may consider the causes of delay in this case (as in all cases of moment) to be bad and unworthy of a man: what can they be but either stupidity, that we do not apprehend the importance of the affair; or improvidence, that we do not attend to the danger of persisting in sin; or negligence, that we do not mind our concernments; or sloth, that keepeth us from rousing and bestirring ourselves in pursuance of what appeareth expedient; or faint-heartedness and cowardice, that we dare not attempt to cross our appetite or our fancy? All which dispositions are very base and shameful. It is the prerogative of human nature to be sagacious in estimating the worth, and provident in descrying the consequences of things; whereas other creatures, by impulse of sense, do only fix their regard on present appearances; which peculiar excellency by stupidity and improvidence we forfeit, degenerating into brutes; and negligence of that, which we discern mainly to concern us, is a quality somewhat beneath those, depressing us below beasts, which cannot be charged with such a fault; sloth is no less despicable,

Ἀργίας προφάσις ἡ ἀνζωλή. Simpl.

Animal hoc providum, sagax, &c. *Cic. de Leg.* i. *Cic. de Offic.* i.

rendering a man fit for nothing; nor is there any thing commonly more reproachful than want of courage: so bad are the causes of delay.

2. And the effects are no less unhappy, being disappointment, damage, trouble, and sorrow. As expedition (catching advantages and opportunities, keeping the spirit up in its heat and vigour, making forcible impressions wherever it lighteth, driving on the current of success) doth subdue business, and achieve great exploits, (as by practising his motto, *to defer nothing*, Alexander did accomplish those mighty feats, which make such a clatter in story; and Cæsar more by the rapid quickness and forwardness of undertaking, than by the greatness of courage, and skilfulness of conduct, did work out those enterprises, which purchased to his name so much glory and renown;) so delay and slowness do spoil all business, do keep off success at distance from us; thereby opportunity is lost, and advantages slip away; our courage doth flag, and our spirit languisheth; our endeavours strike faintly, and are easily repelled; whence disappointment necessarily doth spring, attended with vexation [a].

Μηδὲν ἀναβαλλόμενος. Successus urgere suos, instare, &c. *Luc.* i.

3. Again, we may consider, that to set upon our duty is a great step toward the performance of it; if we can resolve well, and a little push forward, we are in a fair way to dispatch; *to begin*, they say, *is to have half done* [b]; to set out is a good part of the journey; to rise betimes is often harder than to do all the day's work; entering the town is almost the same with taking it; it is so in all business, it is chiefly so in moral practice: for if we can find in our hearts to take our leave of sin, if we can disengage ourselves from the witcheries of present allurement,

[a] Plerisque in rebus tarditas et procrastinatio odiosa est. *Cic. Philip.* 6.

Αἰεὶ δ' ἀμβολιεργὸς ἀνὴρ ἄτῃσι παλαίει. *Hes.*

Dum deliberamus quando incipiendum est, incipere jam serum est. *Quint.* xii. 7.

[b] Dimidium facti qui cœpit habet. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

Μόνον ἀρχὴν ἐπιθῇς τῷ πράγματι, &c. *Chrys.* tom. vi. *Orat.* p. 68.

Τὸ δυσχερὲς καὶ δυσκατόρθωτον τοῦτο ἔχει, τὸ δυνηθῆναι ἐπιβῆναι τῆς εἰσόδου καὶ τῶν προθύρων ἅψασθαι τῆς μετανοίας. *Ib.* p. 79.

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if we can but get over the threshold of virtuous conversation, we shall find the rest beyond expectation smooth and expedite; we shall discover such beauty in virtue, we shall taste so much sweetness in obedience, as greatly will encourage us to proceed therein [c].

4. Again: we may consider, that our time itself is a gift, or a talent committed to us, for the improvement whereof we are responsible no less than for our wealth, our power, our credit, our parts, and other such advantages, wherewith for the serving of God, and furthering our own salvation, we are entrusted: *To redeem the time* is a precept, and of all precepts the most necessary to be observed; for that without redeeming (that is, embracing and well employing) time we can do nothing well; no good action can be performed, no good reward can be procured by us: well may we be advised to take our best care in husbanding it, seeing justly of all things it may be reckoned most precious; its price being inestimable, and its loss irreparable; for all the world cannot purchase one moment of it more than is allowed us; neither can it, when once gone, by any means be recovered: so much indeed as we save thereof, so much we preserve of ourselves; and so far as we lose it, so far in effect we slay ourselves, or deprive ourselves of life; yea by mis-spending it we do worse than so, for a dead sleep, or a cessation from being, is not so bad as doing ill; all that while we live backward, or decline toward a state much worse than annihilation itself. Farther,

Eph. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

Πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα.

5. Consider, that of all time the present is ever the best for the purpose of amending our life. It is the only sure time, that which we have in our hands, and may call our own; whereas the past time is irrevocably gone from us; and the future may never come to us: it is absolutely (reckoning from our becoming sensible of things, and accountable for our actions,) the best, as to our capacity of improving it;

Omnia quæ ventura sunt in incerto jacent, protinus vive. *Sen. de Vit. brev.* 9.

[c] Honestas, quæ principio anxia habetur, ubi contigerit, voluptati luxuriæque habetur. *Vict. in Sept. Sev.*

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Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit. *Virg. Georg.* iii.

Our best days do first pass away, was truly said; the nearer to its source our life is, the purer it is from stain, the freer from clogs, the more susceptive of good impressions, the more vivid and brisk in its activity; the farther we go on, especially in a bad course, the nearer we verge to the dregs of our life; the more dry, the more stiff, the more sluggish we grow: delay, therefore, doth ever steal away the flour of our age, leaving us the bran and refuse thereof. Again,

6. If at any time we do reflect upon the time that hath already slipped away unprofitably from us, it will seem more than enough, and (if we consider well) it will be grievous to us to lose more; the morrow will seem too late to commence a good life; ἀρκετὸς ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος, *The time past of our life*, saith St. Peter, *may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*, or to have continued in ill courses: more indeed it might than suffice; it should be abundantly too much to have embezzled so large a portion of our precious and irreparable time: after we have slept in neglect of our duty, ὥρα ἤδη ἐγερθῆναι, *it is*, as St. Paul saith, *now high time to awake* unto a vigilant observance thereof: this we shall the rather do, if we consider, that,

Sera nimis vita est crastina, vive hodie. *Mart.* i. 16.

1 Pet. iv. 3.

Rom. xiii. 11.

7. For ill living now we shall come hereafter to be sorry, if not with a wholesome contrition, yet with a painful regret; we shall certainly one day repent, if not of our sin, yet of our sinning; if not so as to correct for the future, yet so as to condemn ourselves for what is past: the consideration of our having sacrilegiously robbed our Maker of the time due to his service; of our having injuriously defrauded our souls of the opportunities granted to secure their welfare; of our having profusely cast away our most precious hours of life upon vanity and folly, will sometime twitch us sorely. There is no man who doth not with a sorrowful eye review an ill-past life; who would not gladly recall his mis-spent time; *O mihi præteritos!* O that God would restore my past years to me,

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is every such man's prayer, although it never was heard, never could be granted unto any. And what is more inconsistent with wisdom, than to engage ourselves upon making such ineffectual and fruitless wishes? What is more disagreeable to reason, than to do that, for which we must be forced to confess and call ourselves fools? What man of sense, for a flash of transitory pleasure, for a puff of vain repute, for a few scraps of dirty pelf, would plunge himself into such a gulf of anguish?

8. On the contrary, if, laying hold on occasion, we set ourselves to do well, reflection thereon will yield great satisfaction and pleasure to us; we shall be glad that we have done, and that our task is over; we shall *enjoy our former life:* our time which is so past will not yet be lost unto us; but rather it will be most securely ours, laid up beyond the reach of danger, in the repository of a good conscience [d].

9. Again, all our time of continuance in sin we do *treasure up wrath*, or accumulate guilt; and the larger our guilt is, the sorer must be our repentance; the more bitter the sorrow, the more low the humbling, the more earnest the deprecation requisite to obtain pardon; the broader and deeper the stain is, the more washing is needful to get it out; if we sin much and long, we must grieve answerably, or we shall be no fit objects of mercy.

Rom. ii. 5.

Quam magna deliquimus, tam granditer defleamus, &c. *Cypr. de Laps. Or.* 5.

10. And whenever the sin is pardoned, yet indelible marks and monuments thereof will abide. We shall eternally be obliged to cry *peccavi:* although the punishment may be remitted, the desert of it cannot be removed; a scar from it will stick in our flesh, which ever will deform us; a tang of it will stay in our memory, which always will be disgustful; we shall never reflect on our miscarriages without some confusion and horror [e]; incessantly

[d] Ille sapit quisquis, Posthume, vixit heri. *Mart.* v. 60.
Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus; hoc est
Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui. *Mart.* x. 23.

[e] Pœna potest demi, culpa perennis erit. *Ovid.*
Ἡ συγχώρησις ἐγένετο τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῶν συγκεχωρημένων ἁμαρτημάτων οὐκ ἠφανίζετο παρὰ τῷ Παύλῳ. *Chrys.* tom. viii. p. 97.

we shall be liable to that question of St. Paul, *What fruit had ye of those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?* If, therefore, we could reasonably presume, yea if we could certainly foresee, that we should hereafter in time repent, yet it were unadvisable to persist in sin, seeing it being once committed, can never be reversed, never expunged from the registers of time, never dashed out from the tables of our mind and memory; but will perpetually rest as matter of doleful consideration, and of tragical story to us. *Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.*

Rom. vi. 21.

Ezek. xvi. 61, 63.

Ezek. xxxvi. 31. xx. 43.

11. Again, so much time as we spend in disobedience, so much of reward we do forfeit; for commensurate to our works shall our rewards be; the fewer our good works are in the course of our present life, the smaller shall be the measures of joy, of glory, of felicity dispensed to us hereafter; the later consequently we repent, the less we shall be happy: *One star*, saith the Apostle, *differeth from another in glory;* and of all stars, those in the celestial sphere will shine brightest, who did soon rise here, and continued long, by the lustre of their good works, to glorify their heavenly Father; for *the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* While, therefore, we let our interest lie dead by lingering, or run behind by sinful practice, we are very bad husbands for our soul; our spiritual estate doth thereby hugely suffer; every minute contracteth a damage, that runneth through millions of ages, and which therefore will amount to an immense sum: and who for all the pleasures here would forego one degree of blissful joy hereafter? who for all earthly splendors would exchange one spark of celestial glory? who for all the treasures below would let slip one gem out of his heavenly crown?

1 Cor. xv. 41.

Prov. iv. 18.

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12. Farther, let us consider that whatever our age, whatever our condition or case be, the advice not to procrastinate our obedience is very suitable and useful.

Sub pædagogo cæperis licet, serum est. *Mart.* viii. 44.

Art thou young? then it is most proper to enter upon living well. For when we set out, we should be put in a right way; when we begin to be men, we should begin to use our reason well; life and virtue should be of the same standing. What is more ugly than a child, that hath learnt little, having learnt to do ill? than naughtiness springing up in that state of innocence? The foundation of good life is to be laid in at that age, upon which the rest of our life is built; for this is the manner of our proceeding; the present always dependeth upon what is past; our practice is guided by notions that we had sucked in, is swayed by inclinations that we got before; whence usually our first judgments of things, and our first propensions do stretch their influence upon the whole future life. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, saith the Wise Man.

Prov. xxii. 6.

That age, as it is most liable to be corrupted by vice, so it is most capable of being imbued with virtue; then nature is soft and pliable, so as easily to be moulded into any shape, ready to admit any stamp impressed thereon[f]; then the mind is a pure table, in which good principles may be fairly engraven, without raising out any former ill prejudices; then the heart being a soil free of weeds, the seeds of goods being cast therein will undisturbedly grow and thrive; then the complexion being tender will easily be set into a right posture: our soul is then a vessel empty and sweet; good liquor therefore may be instilled, which will both fit it, and season it with a durable tincture; the extreme curiosity and huge credulity of that age, as they greedily will swallow any, so will they admit good instruction. If we do then imbibe false conceptions, or have bad impressions made on our minds, it will be

[f] Natura tenacissimi sumus eorum, quæ rudibus annis percipimus, &c. *Quint.* i. 1.

Difficulter eraditur quod rudes animi perbiberunt. *Hier. ad Lætam.*

hard afterwards to expel, or to correct them g. Passion is then very fluid and moveable, but, not being impetuously determined any way, may easily be derived into the right channel. Then the quickness of our wit, the briskness of our fancy, the freshness of our memory, the vigour of our affections, the lusty and active mettle of our spirits, being applied to virtuous studies and endeavours, will produce most noble fruits; the beauty of which will adorn us, the sweetness will please us, so as to leave on our minds a perpetual relish and satisfaction in goodness h. Then, being less encumbered with the cares, less entangled in the perplexities, less exposed to the temptations of the world and secular affairs, we can more easily set forth, we may proceed more expeditely in good courses. Then, being void of that stinging remorse, which doth adhere to reflections upon past follies and mis-spent time, with more courage and alacrity we may prosecute good undertakings; then, beginning so soon to embrace virtue, we shall have advantage with more leisure and more ease to polish and perfect it through our ensuing course of life: setting out so early, in the very morning of our age, without much straining, marching on softly and fairly, we may go through our journey to happiness.

Our actions then are the first fruits of our life, which therefore are fit and due sacrifices to our Maker; which if we do withdraw, we shall have nothing left so worthy or acceptable to present unto him. Will it be seemly to offer him the dregs and refuse of our age? Shall we not be ashamed to bring a crazy temper of body and soul, dry bones, and decayed senses, a dull fancy, a treacherous memory, a sluggish spirit before him? Shall we then, when we are fit for little, begin to undertake his service? With

g Ut corpora ad quosdam membrorum flexus formari nisi tenera non possunt, sic animos ad pleraque duriores robur ipsum facit. *Quint.* i. 1.

Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
Testa diu. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

h Ἥδει γὰρ ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἡ νιότης, ὅτι εὐρίπιστον, ὅτι εὐεξαπάτητον, ὅτι εὐόλισθον, καὶ σφοδροτέρου δεῖ χαλινοῦ. *Chrys.* ἀνδρ. ά.

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our decrepit limbs and wasted strength shall we set ourselves to *run the ways of his commandments?*

As it is uncomfortable to think of being parsimonious, when our stock is almost gone; so it is to become thrifty of our life when it comes near the bottom. Δεινὴ ἐνὶ πυθμενὶ φειδώ.

If we keep innocency, spend our youth well, it will yield unexpressible comfort to us; it will save us much sorrow, it will prevent many inconveniences to us: if we have spent it ill, it will yield us great displeasure, it will cost us much pains; we shall be forced sadly to bewail our folly and vanity therein; it will be bitter to see, that we must unlive our former life, and undo all we have done; that we must renounce the principles we have avowed, we must root out the habits we have planted, we must forsake the paths which we have beaten and so long trod in, if ever we will be happy; it will be grievous to us, when we come with penitential regret to deprecate, *Lord, remember not the sins of my youth;* we shall feel sore pain, when *our bones are full of the sins of our youth*, and we come *to possess the iniquities thereof.*

Ps. xxxvii. 38.

Ps. xxv. 7. Job xx. 11. xiii. 26.

It is, therefore *good*, as the Prophet saith, *that a man bear the yoke in his youth*, when his neck is tender[i]: it is excellent advice which the Preacher giveth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*

Lam. iii. 27.

Eccl. xii. 1.

Aristotle saith, that young men *are* not *fit hearers of moral doctrine*, because, saith he, *they are unexperienced in affairs of life;* and *because they are apt to follow their passions, which indispose to hear with fruit or profit*[k]. But his conclusion is false, and his reasons may be well turned against him; for because young men want experience,

[i] Fingit equum tenera docilem cervice magister
Ire viam, quam monstrat eques. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

[k] Τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκεῖος ἀκροατὴς ὁ νέος· ἄπειρος γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων· ἔτι τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀκολουθητικὸς ἂν ματαίως ἀκούσεται καὶ ἀνωφελῶς. *Eth.* i. 3.

therefore is there no bad prejudice, no contrary habit to obstruct their embracing sound doctrine; because their passions are vehement and strong, therefore being rightly ordered, and set upon good objects, they with great force will carry them to virtuous practice: that indeed is the best time to regulate and tame passions; as horses must be broken when they are colts, dogs must be made when they are whelps, else they will never be brought to any thing. The Poet therefore advised better than the Philosopher:

—— nunc adbibe puro
Pectore verba puer, nunc melioribus offer: Hor. Ep. i. 2.

and St. Paul plainly doth confute him, when he biddeth parents to *educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;* when he chargeth Titus that he *exhort young men to be sober minded;* when he commendeth Timothy for that he had ἀπὸ βρέφους, *from his infancy known the holy Scriptures;* so doth the Psalmist, when he saith, *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to thy word.* And Solomon, when he declareth that his moral precepts did serve *to give subtility to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion;* when he biddeth us to *train up a child in the way he should go.* St. Peter doth intimate the same, when he biddeth us *as new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word;* and our Saviour, when he said, *suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God;* that is, the more simplicity and innocence a man is endued with, the more apt he is to embrace and comply with the evangelical doctrine. Aristotle therefore was out, when he would exclude young men from the schools of virtue. It is observable that he contradicteth himself; for Οὐ μικρὸν διαφέρει τὸ οὕτως ἢ οὕτως, εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων ἐθίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ πάμπολυ δὲ τὸ πᾶν. *It is,* saith he, *of no small concernment to be from youth accustomed thus or thus; yea, it is very much, or rather all.* And how shall a young man be accustomed to do well, if he be not allowed to learn what is to be done?

Eph. vi. 4. Tit. ii. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 22. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Psal. cxix. 9. Prov. i. 4. Prov. xxii. 6, 15. 1 Pet. ii. 2. Luke xviii. 16. Eth. ii. 2.

Again; are we old? it is then high time to begin; we

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have then less time to spare from our most important business; we stand then in most imminent danger, upon the edge of perdition, and should therefore be nimble to skip out thence; our forces being diminished, our quickness and industry should be increased; the later we set out, the more speed it behoveth us to make. If we stay, we shall grow continually more indisposed and unfit to amend; it will be too late, when utter decrepitness and dotage have seized upon us, and our body doth survive our soul[l]. When so much of our time, of our parts, of our strength, are fled, we should husband the rest to best advantage, and make the best satisfaction we can unto God, and unto our souls, with the remainder.

This age hath some peculiar advantages, which we should embrace: the froth of humours is then boiled out, the fervours of lust are slaked, passions are allayed, appetites are flatted; so that then inclinations to sin are not so violent, nor doth the enjoyment thereof so much gratify[m].

Long experience then hath discovered the vanity of all worldly things, and the mischief of ill courses; so that we can then hardly admire any thing, or be fond of enjoying what we have found unprofitable or hurtful.

Age is excused from compliance with the fashions, and thence much exempted from temptations of the world; so that it may be good without obstacle or opposition.

It is proper thereto to be grave and serious, and, consequently, to be virtuous; for gravity without virtue, and seriousness about vain things, are ridiculous.

Nothing doth so adorn this age as goodness, nothing doth so disgrace it as wickedness; *This hoary head is a*

Prov. xvi. 31.

[l] Quod facere solent qui serius exeunt—calcar addamus. *Sen. Ep.* 68, 76, 19.

Apoc. iii. 2. Στήριξον τὰ λοιπὰ, ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν.

[m] —— non omnia grandior ætas
Quæ fugiamus habet——. *Ovid.*

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ νέότης πελάγει προσέοικε μαινομένῳ, κυμάτων ἀγρίων, καὶ πνευμάτων γέμοντι πονηρῶν· ἡ δὲ πολιὰ ὥσπερ εἰς λιμένα ἀκύμαντον τὰς τῶν γεγηρακότων ὁρμίζει ψυχὰς, παρέχουσα τῇ παρὰ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐντρυφᾷν ἀσφαλείᾳ. *Chrys.* tom. i. *Orat.* 38.

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crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness; but it is a mark of infamy, if it be observed proceeding in a course of iniquity; it signifieth that experience hath not improved it; it argueth incorrigible folly, or rather incurable madness therein.

There is indeed no care, no employment proper for old men, but to prepare for their dissolution; to be bidding adieu to the world, with its vain pomps and mischievous pleasures; to be packing up their goods, to be casting their accounts, to be fitting themselves to abide in that state, into which they are tumbling; to appear at that bar, before which suddenly nature will set them. As a ship, which hath long been tossed and weather-beaten, which is shattered in its timber, and hath lost much of its rigging, should do nothing in that case but work toward the port, there to find its safety and ease; so should a man, who, having passed many storms and agitations of the world, is grievously battered and torn with age, strive only to die well, to get safe into the harbour of eternal rest.

In freto viximus, moriamur in portu. *Sen. Ep.* 19.

In fine, Epicurus himself said well, that *no man is either immature or over-ripe in regard to his soul's health*[n]; we can never set upon it too soon, we should never think it too late to begin: to live well is always the best thing we can do, and therefore we should at any time endeavour it; there are common reasons for all ages, there are special reasons for each age, which most strongly and most clearly do urge it; it is most seasonable for young men, it is most necessary for old men, it is most advisable for all men[o].

Again; be our condition what it will, this advice is reasonable: Are we in health? we owe God thanks for that excellent gift; and the best gratitude we can express is, the improving it for his service and our own good: we

[n] Οὔτ' ἄωρος οὐδείς ἐστιν, οὔτε πάρωρος πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν ὑγιαῖνον. *Epict. ad Monæc.*

[o] Quare juventus, imo omnis ætas (neque enim rectæ voluntati serum est tempus ullum) totis mentibus huc tendamus, in hoc elaboremus; forsan et consummare contingat. *Quint.* xii. 1.

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should not lose the advantage of a season so fit for our obedience and repentance; while the forces of our body and mind are entire, while we are not discomposed by pain or faintness, we should strive to dispatch this needful work, for which infirmity may disable us.

Are we sick? it is then time to consider our frailty, and the best we can to obviate the worst consequences thereof: it is then very fit, when we do feel the sad effects of sin, to endeavour the prevention of worse mischiefs that may follow; it is seasonable, when we lie under God's correcting hand, to submit unto him, to deprecate his wrath, to seek reconciliation with him by all kinds of obedience suitable to that state; with serious resolutions to amend hereafter, if it shall please God to restore us; it is most advisable, when we are in the borders of death, to provide for that state which lieth just beyond it.

Are we rich and prosperous; it is expedient then presently to amend, lest our wealth do soon corrupt us with pride, with luxury, with sloth, with stupidity; lest our prosperity become an inevitable snare, an irrecoverable bane unto us.

Prov. i. 32.

Are we poor or afflicted? it is then also needful to repent quickly, that we may have a comfortable support for our soul, and a certain succour in our distress; that we may get a treasure to supply our want, a joy to drown our sorrow, a buoy to keep our hearts from sinking into desperation and disconsolateness. This condition is a medicine, which God administereth for our soul's health; if it do not work presently, so as to do us good, it will prove both grievous and hurtful to us.

13. Lastly, we may consider, that, abating all the rueful consequences of abiding in sin, abstracting from the desperate hazards it exposeth us to in regard to the future life, it is most reasonable to abandon it, betaking ourselves to a virtuous course of practice. For virtue in itself is far more eligible than vice; to keep God's commandments hath much greater convenience than to break them; the life of a good man, in all considerable respects, is highly to be preferred above the life of a bad man; for

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what is virtue, but a way of living that advanceth our nature into a similitude with God's most excellent and happy nature [p]; that promoteth our true benefit and interest; that procureth and preserveth health, ease, safety, liberty, peace, comfortable subsistence, fair repute, tranquillity of mind, all kinds of convenience to us? To what ends did our most benign and most wise Maker design and suit his law, but to the furthering our good, and securing us from mischief, as not only himself hath declared, but reason sheweth, and experience doth attest? What is vice, but a sort of practice which debaseth and disparageth us, which plungeth us into grievous evils, which bringeth distemper of body and soul, distress of fortune, danger, trouble, reproach, regret, and numberless inconveniences, upon us; which, for no other reason than because it so hurteth and grieveth us, was by our loving Creator interdicted to us? Virtue is most noble and worthy, most lovely, most profitable, most pleasant, most creditable; vice is most sordid and base, ugly, hurtful, bitter, disgraceful in itself, and in its consequences. If we compare them together, we shall find that virtue doth always preserve our health, but vice commonly doth impair it; that virtue improveth our estate, vice wasteth it; that virtue adorneth our reputation, vice blemisheth it; that virtue strengtheneth our parts, vice weakeneth them; that virtue maintaineth our freedom, vice enslaveth us; that virtue keepeth our mind in order and peace, vice discomposeth and disquieteth it; virtue breedeth satisfaction and joy, vice spawneth displeasure and anguish of conscience: to enter therefore into a virtuous course of life, what is it but to embrace happiness? to continue in vicious practice, what is it but to stick in misery?

Deut. x. 13. Mic. vi. 8. Neh. ix. 13. Rom. vii. 12. Ps. xix. 9. cxix. 107.

By entering into good life, we enter into the favour and friendship of God, engaging his infinite power and wisdom for our protection, our succour, our direction, and guidance; enjoying the sweet effluxes of his mercy and

[p] Est virtus nihil aliud quam in se perfecta, et ad summum perducta natura. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

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bounty; we therewith become friends to the holy angels and blessed saints; to all good men, being united in a holy and happy consortship of judgment, of charity, of hope, of devotion with them: we become friends to all the world, which we oblige by good wishes, and good deeds, and by the influence of good example: we become friends to ourselves, whom we thereby enrich and adorn with the best goods; whom we gratify and please with the choicest delights: but persisting in sin, we continue to affront, wrong, and displease our Maker, to be disloyal toward our sovereign Lord, to be ingrateful toward our chief benefactor, to disoblige the best friend we have, to provoke a most just and severe judge, to cope with omnipotency, to contradict infallibility, to enrage the greatest patience, to abuse immense goodness; we thereby become enemies to all the world; to God, whom we injure and dishonour; to the friends of God, whom we desert and oppose; to the creatures, which we abuse to our pride, lust, and vanity; to our neighbours, whom we corrupt or seduce; to ourselves, whom we bereave of the best goods, and betray to the worst evils.

Beginning to live soberly, we begin to live like men, following the conduct of reason; beginning to live in charity, we commence the life of angels, enjoying in ourselves most sweet content, and procuring great benefit to others; but going on in sinful voluptuousness, we proceed to live like beasts, wholly guided by sense, and swayed by appetite; being pertinacious in malice, we continue to be like fiends, working torment in ourselves, and mischief to our neighbours.

Embracing virtue, we become wise and sober men, worthy and honourable, beneficial and useful to the world; but continuing in vice, we continue to be foolish and vain, to be vile and despicable, to be worthless and useless.

By our delay to amend, what do we gain? what, but a little flashy and transient pleasure, instead of a solid and durable peace; but a little counterfeit profit, instead of real wealth; but a little smoke of deceitful opinion, in-

stead of unquestionably sound honour; shadows of imaginary goods, instead of those which are most substantial and true, a good mind, the love of God, the assured welfare of our souls. But this field of discourse is too spacious; I shall only therefore for conclusion say, that speedily applying ourselves to obedience, and breaking off our sins by repentance, is in effect nothing else but, from a present hell in trouble, and the danger of a final hell in torment, to be translated into a double heaven; one of joyful tranquillity here, another of blissful rest hereafter; unto the which Almighty God in his mercy bring us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. *Amen.* SERM. XLIX.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. 1 Thess. v. 23.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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